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ABSTRACT

A three phase study evaluated the comparative effectiveness of various features that comprise a postsecondary writing program. The first phase of the study examined the college composition programs on the 19 California State University (CSU) campuses to identify and describe distinctive program features. The second and third phases measured both students' writing performance and self-perceptions of their writing achievement. Results confirmed the general hypothesis that the organization of composition instruction does matter: certain aspects of postsecondary writing programs are significantly associated with improved student performance and self-perceptions. The following conclusions emerged from an analysis of the relations among the holistic (HS), correctness and efficiency (CE), and development and focus (DF) scores: (1) HS correlated highly with CE in the measurement of writing ability; (2) freshman composition students scored significantly lower in all three categories when only the upper-division certification method was used; (3) CE graded student writing samples more severely than DF; (4) students wrote better in programs that included both instruction and certification; and (5) when key administrators encouraged strong campus-wide writing instruction and assistance, students' writing performance increased. Extensive appendices to this final project report appear in volume II. These include three articles published in the "Council of Writing Program Administrators Journal" reporting on this study, research documents used for this study (faculty questionnaire, campus fact sheet, interview protocols, student self-perception questionnaire, the essay topic, scoring guides, sample scored student essays), and data tables. (JD)

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FINAL REPORT

JULY 1986

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RESEARCH IN EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF WRITING

Volume I: Final Project Report

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Nor do the opinions expressed in this report necessarily reflect the position or policy of The California State University or its campuses.

Such an extensive project requires the support and encouragement of many people. While we do not have the space to recognize all of them, we owe a special acknowledgement for extraordinary help during the formative stages to Joseph Dominic of the National Institute of Education and to Leon L. Thomas, former associate dean of Institutional Research of The California State University.

The project staff wishes to thank William Mason, director of the division of Analytical Studies of The California State University Chancellor's Office. Dr. Mason and his staff have endured our presence and have shared their knowledge and resources with us. Thanks are also due to Dr. Gerald Burns, former Executive Director of The California State University Foundation, Mary Fullington, Foundation accountant, and their staff.

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B. "Patterns of Composition Instruction." WPA, 8 (Spring 1985), 25-34. 13

C. "Speaking Frankly: Writing Program Administrators Look at Instructional Goals and Faculty Retraining." WPA, 9 (Fall-Winter 1985), 19-30. 24

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CHAPTER ONE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background to the Study

National concern over the apparent inability of students to write with competence has been so widespread in recent years that it hardly requires documentation. While traditionally focused at the elementary grades and high schools, more and more of the concern is being directed to postsecondary institutions, as even college graduates are perceived to be inadequate readers and writers. However, little information has been available about the most effective ways to organize college composition programs. Administrators of composition instruction at these institutions have generally relied upon campus tradition, personal predilection, and information casually accumulated in order to set up and maintain writing programs.

We began this research with a description of the writing programs we found in operation on the nineteen campuses of the California State University (CSU), which we chose as representative of the diversity found in American higher education. The CSU offered a particularly rich research setting: centralized data, newly funded systemwide writing examinations and remedial assistance for entering freshmen, writing certification requirements for degree candidates, and administrators and faculty generally concerned with the quality of writing instruction.

This substantial instructional activity and interest has led to a wide variety of programmatic developments on the CSU campuses. Our goal became not only to understand and describe these developments but to measure their relationship to student growth in writing skill and attitude toward writing. Our analysis allowed us to draw conclusions and make recommendations about the comparative effectiveness of the various features that make up a postsecondary writing program.

Research Questions

Our study of college composition programs progressed through three extensive phases of activity, each of which responded to a set of research questions. In our first phase, our main purpose was to describe college composition programs and identify distinctive program features. In the second and third phases, our efforts were directed toward the measurement of students' writing performance and of their self-perceptions of achievement in writing. These student outcome data of the second phase were analyzed with program variables from Phase I; we then sought to understand why certain program features correlated with enhanced or decreased student outcomes for comparable student groups.

PHASE I Research Questions

- What are the *goals* of composition instruction at the college level?
- What is a composition *program*?
- What are the *institutional structures* within which composition programs operate?
- Who are the *students* these programs serve?

PHASE II and III Research Questions

- .Do any of the program features discovered in Phase I make any difference in student outcomes, regardless of student competence and ethnicity?
- .Are some program features more effective than others for instructing freshmen of varying abilities?

Research Design

This study was carried out in three stages. The first phase activities began with a review of existing literature and the development of a taxonomy of writing program features to guide our further development of research instruments and planning. From our initial work, we decided to accumulate the necessary descriptive data by surveying the writing program faculty on all nineteen campuses and by interviewing program, department, and campus administrators on a subsample of ten campuses. Analysis of the faculty survey yielded thirteen factors describing instructional approach and attitudes toward college composition responsibilities. The interview analyses produced seven variables describing a range of program features:

- .Program Goals
- .Location of Remedial Assistance
- .Sequence of Remedial Instruction
- .Faculty Development (Retraining)
- .Involvement in the Upper-Division Writing Requirement
- .Availability of Upper-Division Writing Instruction
- .Certification Method for the Upper-Division Writing Requirement.

Since the theoretical work leading to the taxonomy indicated that a variety of contextual matters might significantly affect the writing program, we also included four variables describing campus and department features:

- .Ethnic mix of undergraduate student population
- .Size of undergraduate enrollment
- .Proportion of tenured faculty in the English department
- .Proportion of part-time writing instructors

The second phase of the study was spent in planning, developing, and pilot-testing an expository writing topic, three different measures of students' writing performance, and a measure of students' self-perception of gains in writing skill.

Three writing performance scales were developed to use in measuring each essay. One was a form of traditional Holistic Scoring, used to judge the overall quality of the students' writing. We also tried something very new: we invented two measures of specific writing "features" and used them to measure a marked section in each essay (a "discourse block") rather than the entire essay. The Development and Focus Scale (D&F) measures the writers' ability to develop and support ideas while using rhetorical markers to guide and focus the reader, and the Correctness and Efficiency Scale (C&E) assesses clarity and correctness in the context of sophisticated sentence construction.

We gathered the data on students' self-perceptions of instructional gains in writing from a checklist of twelve possibilities such as "I feel I am better able to spot weaknesses in my writing." A factor analysis procedure was used to group responses in similar areas, reducing these twelve questions to three factors covering ten questions:

.Cognition, describing deeper and easier reflection about one's own writing;

.Revision Process, describing a greater understanding of specific skills in the revision process;

.Revision Success, more generally describing students' willingness to revise and their perceived effectiveness of revision.

We gathered these data from freshmen at the end of their freshman composition course on all campuses for each of three school terms (one school year). However, we selected for scoring and analysis a more manageable subsample of 3420 essays, representing 15 campuses; each essay received three pairs of scores (one pair from each scale).

Data analysis and interpretation were the principal activities of phase III. Analysis of variance and covariance methods were employed to compare student outcomes on campuses grouped according to program variables. Two covariates were used to take into account between-program differences in the proportion of "remedial" students and "special admits." Students' scores on the systemwide English Placement Test were used along with their verbal scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test as baseline measures of entering student ability.

This report focuses upon the last two phases of research. An earlier report, Final Report on Phase I, available from the ERIC clearinghouse, focuses upon the descriptive work in Phase I.

Findings

The large accumulation of data produced many findings, which are detailed below in Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight. We summarize here three examples, relating to 1) the measurement of writing ability, 2) the significance of our program variables, and 3) the effects of an upper-division writing proficiency requirement.

Because we originated two new ways of measuring writing ability, our findings from this project must include a description of the value of these measures. The D&F Scale, which we expected would spread out students clustered at the higher end of the Holistic scale, in fact allowed us to discriminate among the weaker students. The C&E scale, on the other hand, apparently measures a skill which is much more difficult for student writers to master. This finding has implications for the remedial curriculum, which has traditionally focused upon C&E matters. We further found that the C&E scale correlated higher with the Holistic scale than did the D&F scale, suggesting that (despite efforts to the contrary) Holistic readers are influenced more by C&E characteristics.

Almost all our program variables proved to be significantly related to one or both student outcomes for the student population as a whole and for "low ability" students specifically: program goals, location of remedial assistance, sequence of remedial instruction, faculty retraining efforts, proportion of tenured faculty and part-time writing instructors, and campus ethnic diversity.

Somewhat to our surprise, all variables related to the upper-division writing requirement emerged from data analysis correlating significantly with the student self-perception factors as well as with the three writing scores.

Conclusions

Certain conclusions emerge with clarity from our findings. The most important conclusion is the confirmation that the organization of composition instruction matters: certain aspects of college and university writing programs are associated with improved student performance and self-perceptions.

Because so many of our program variables emerged as significantly related to student outcomes, we cannot discuss them all here. The reader is referred to Chapters Eight and Nine for the complete analysis and discussion of our findings and conclusions. Here we will highlight a few of the conclusions with potential implications for those making decisions about postsecondary writing programs.

Part-time versus Full-time Staff

We have found that students on campuses with fewer than 75 % tenured faculty in the English department received higher Holistic scores than students on campuses closer to being "tenured in." Students on campuses with fewer tenured faculty also scored higher on the "Revision Process" self-perception factor. Furthermore, when we look only at students who have completed remedial work, the evidence is even more compelling. Such students on these campuses perform better than their remedial peers on all three scales we used on the writing sample.

It may be that the presence of a significant number of newer faculty on a teaching staff is in itself a positive influence on the teaching of the entire staff, enough to lead to enhanced student writing performance. Or it may be that the departments which have sufficient enrollment to earn the new positions to hire new faculty are the most effective to begin with. But it is also possible that the untenured faculty are the more effective composition teachers.

Influences from the Upper Division Writing Requirement

One of our more puzzling findings is the consistently significant relationship between freshman writing scores and campus decisions affecting the implementation of the Upper Division Writing Requirement for graduation. For example, on campuses where the only method for certification of upper division writing skill is an examination (as opposed to a course), "low ability" freshmen score significantly lower on all three essay measures. If one seeks only causal explanations, the relationship seems to be either accidental or absurd; a program designed for upper-division students cannot in itself be held responsible for freshman writing performance. But the correlation of the two suggest that some third factor to which the other two are correlated may provide the explanation.

This and similar findings regarding the upper-division requirement suggest that an underlying factor which we have called "campus climate for writing" shows up in the variables describing differences in the implementation of that requirement. Our data suggest that this "campus climate" reflects an institutional attitude toward writing and writing instruction, which in turn influences the effectiveness of the lower division writing program.

Chapter Nine discusses this and other implications in greater detail, including recommendations based upon the relationships we have uncovered.

Implications

We believe that this study makes original contributions to a number of fields directly and indirectly related to college composition. Persons concerned with the measurement of writing ability will notice our invention and use of Feature scales, similar to but different in several important ways from both Holistic and Primary Trait measures. Program evaluators may wish to use or adapt the various instruments we developed to describe writing programs and to measure their effectiveness. Educational researchers will notice that most (but not all) of our data confirm findings in other areas of education. College and university administrators will want to compare the program features of their institutions with those program features which our data show to be associated with enhanced student and faculty outcomes, most particularly with regard to the "campus climate for writing."

Perhaps most important, those persons responsible for administering writing programs in colleges and universities (English department chairs and composition coordinators) will want to look closely at the data analyses in Chapter Eight and at the recommendations in Chapter Nine. There, along with the data and recommendations, they may well find new options for decision making. Our overriding goal has been to develop and present information not only useful to researchers but valuable in a practical way to teachers and administrators.

CHAPTER TWO

INTRODUCTION: PROBLEM, PURPOSE, SETTING, PERSONNEL

The Problem: Perceived Inadequacies of College Writing Programs

We have already pointed to the continuing national concern about the writing skills of students in and graduates of American educational institutions. While this final report was in preparation, a series of national studies and recommendations pointing to this problem in postsecondary institutions received steady attention in the press. Meanwhile, the installation of graduation requirements in writing skills outside of the curriculum in The California State University, the University System of Georgia, the City University of New York, and elsewere, and the spread of basic skills writing proficiency tests for teaching credential candidates in many states, have given concrete expression to an underlying belief that too many college graduates cannot write well enough. Meanwhile the expansion of the college population to include students who have not in the past been able to attend has added major responsibilities for pre-college training in writing to many university curricula.

Although postsecondary institutions, and particularly the English departments in these institutions, have been striving to meet the new challenges, the state of knowledge about collegiate composition instruction remains inadequate for the task --though a growing body of research encourages the belief that help is on the way. Despite the million or more students seeking (or required to seek) freshman composition instruction each year, directors of programs in writing instruction have had little research to look to as they tried to mobilize slim resources and (generally) inexperienced and thinly-trained faculty to teach in their particular settings. Very little has changed since E. D. Hirsch summarized the problem in The Philosophy of Composition (1977): "Our most urgent problem . . . [is] the lack of direction in our teaching and research. We are beset by conflicting ideologies which confuse us and hamper progress in both domains." While the teaching of writing is still considered central to higher education, this confusion about both its pedagogical and organizational premises continues to diminish the effectiveness of instruction. Douglas B. Park amplifies this problem in a pessimistic article he calls "Theoretical Expectations: On Conceiving Composition and Rhetoric as a Discipline":

> What composition studies now offer is a potpourri of theory, research, and speculation --some of it close to pedagogy, some far removed, some of it speculative and experimentally oriented, some of it jargon-riddled and pretentious. Enough of it is so provoking and stimulating that the pervading sense of excitement and challenge seem justified. What composition research does not offer is a shapely coherence that makes it definable as a discipline.
>
> College English, Sept. 1979

As a result of this theoretical and pedagogical incoherence, professionals interested in developing effective writing instruction programs have been faced with a variety of discordant theories to guide practice, none of which seems to generalize convincingly beyond the limited population for which it was developed. For example, a theory of composition which calls for intensive writing exercises with minimal direct guidance might work well with well-trained preparatory school graduates, but might be quite inappropriate for educationally disadvantaged students whose fundamental reading difficulties block writing in general. Or a learning center designed for commuting urban community college students with writing problems might have little to offer a highly selective residential institution.

It is, however, important to distinguish the need for different programs for different kinds of students and settings from the confusion of research and pedagogy that diminishes composition instruction. While there are many program variables, they are by no means infinite, and it should be possible to describe and analyze various ways of organizing composition instruction in order to discover what seems to be most effective under different conditions. At present, administrators of composition instruction generally rely on campus tradition, personal prediliction, and information casually accumulated in order to set up and maintain writing programs. They are entitled to more systematic information. The national interest argues that such information be made available to them so that the national investment in writing instruction may perhaps yield a better return.

Study Purpose

This project is designed to provide to researchers, composition program directors, and composition policy makers a coherent framework for ordering or planning writing instruction activities heretofore left largely to personal experience or historical accident. This framework includes in-depth descriptions of program options for different populations in different post-secondary settings, reliable data about the relative success of these program options according to several combinations of outcome measures, and a consideration of project findings in the light of composition theory.

The project as a whole covers four and a half years of work, and this final report incorporates all of its findings, documents, and procedures to date. Some additional detail about the descriptive phase of the research is available in the Phase I report (revised, May, 1983), which is available through the Educational Resources Information Center (Ed 239-292; Ed 239-293). As is customary with research of this sort, we have accumulated more data than the project funding and plan have allowed us to analyze; we hope to continue to publish work derived from our data over the next several years in professional journals. We have, however, attempted to make this report complete in itself and completely responsive to our research questions.

Although the principal data collection activity, and the principal focus of this report, relates to student outcome measures, we have been careful to develop a series of faculty outcome measures as well. Responses to the faculty survey allowed us to develop the factor analyses presented and analyzed in Chapter Eight of this report; the coded interview data from our campus visits (detailed in Chapter Eight of the Phase I report and analyzed in Chapter Eight of this final report) provide outcome as well as descriptive information; and the faculty commentary sheets (written while the students were responding to the project-designed essay question) provide yet another window for seeing the effects of programs upon those teaching within them.

We have been alert to the dangers of relying too heavily upon any one set of student outcome data for research findings. Thus we have accumulated three kinds of student data: objective information, such as grade point averages and entrance test scores; student self-perception data in relation to writing, derived from a self-perception questionnaire collected along with the writing sample; and performance data, resulting from three separate scorings of the writing sample. We have been well aware of the reliability problems attendant upon essay scoring and, in an attempt to minimize those problems, have devised three separate scoring guides for use by controlled essay scoring sessions in order to derive as much information as possible from different ways of looking at the student writing.

We believe that this study makes original contributions to a number of fields directly and indirectly related to college composition. Those concerned with the measurement of writing ability will notice our invention and use of Feature scales, similar to but different in several important ways from both Holistic and Primary Trait measures. Program evaluators may wish to use or adapt the various instruments we developed to describe writing programs and to measure their effectiveness. Educational researchers will notice that most (but not all) of our data confirm findings in other areas of education. College and university administrators will want to compare the structure of their composition programs and the campus climate in relation to writing of their institutions with those program features which our data show to be associated with enhanced student and faculty outcomes.

Perhaps most important, those responsible for administering writing programs in colleges and universities (English department chairs and composition coordinators) will want to look closely at the data analyses in Chapter Eight and at the recommendations in Chapter Nine. There they will find options for decision making, along with considerable data and recommendations based on the data. Our overriding goal has been to develop and present information not only useful to researchers but valuable in a practical way to teachers and administrators.

Research Setting

This study of college composition programs makes use of The California State University (CSU), a nineteen-campus system of higher education with a sufficient variety of students, faculty, campus programs and campus environments to encompass most of the issues relating to writing instruction programs in American colleges and universities. The sheer size of the CSU, with over 300,000 students, and the wide range of its writing instruction programs, offer a (large scale) microcosm of such programs in American higher education as a whole. The following summary of information about the CSU and the structure of the writing programs on CSU campuses is designed to assist readers who may not be familiar with these matters to understand the local context of the research. Neither the programs nor structures described should be seen as unique to the CSU setting; in all cases they are fairly typical of present practice or are readily implemented in other settings in American higher education.

The California State University

This system of institutions consists of nineteen campuses spread out along the thousand-mile length of California. Governed by a Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor of the state, and administered centrally by the Chancellor's Office located in Long Beach, the campuses still maintain different characters and missions. Distinct from the University of California, the CSU offers bachelor's and master's degrees, teaching credentials, and various professional programs; it is authorized to conduct research consistent with its basic teaching goals.

The Chancellor's Office has played a significant role in the development of the writing instruction programs on campus. Funding for the English Placement Test and the English Equivalency Examination has been administered through the Chancellor's Office, as have the special funds provided for remedial writing instruction. The Division of Academic Program Improvement, formerly called New Program Development and Evaluation, for example, funded forty-nine innovative campus programs in the teaching of writing to a total amount of $1,111,748 from 1975 through 1981. The Division of Analytic Studies, formerly called Institutional Research, has provided space, support, and matching funds for the research reported on here.

The English Council. This network of representatives from each of the campus English departments meets each fall and spring to discuss professional concerns. These meetings have helped form strong personal and professional links among key departmental faculty, and have given strong impetus to recent developments in the area of writing skills. Both of the lower-division testing programs, the upper-division writing requirement, and this research project all began with discussions at English Council meetings. Throughout the four and one-half years of this project, we have made regular progress reports to the Council, at every meeting, and received extraordinary assistance from the departmental leaders who make up the Council in response to our constant requests for data. The strong support of the Council has made it possible for us to accumulate the data for the project, as we describe below in Chapter Six, and this support represents a particular strength of the project.

The English Placement Test (EPT). Entering lower-division students are required to take the English Placement Test (EPT), unless they have completed freshman composition elsewhere or have entrance test scores above the 80th percentile in verbal aptitude. Over 100,000 completed the EPT between the first offering in 1977 and the beginning of our data collection in 1982, and the campuses are required to offer special assistance to students who score in the lower half of the total scoring range. The 2 1/2 hour test is designed by a CSU test development committee, with the technical assistance of the Educational Testing Service, and consists of four parts: reading, sentence construction, logic and organization, and essay writing. The Legislature has provided enriched instructional funding for students scoring below the 50th percentile on the EPT. Each campus receives a special allotment from the Chancellor's Office to be used in whatever way is deemed appropriate by the campus for these low-scoring students.

The English Equivalency Examination (EEE). This voluntary credit-by-examination program is taken each year by approximately 4,000 students who may gain either two terms of credit for freshman English (about 30% achieve that level) or exemption from the EPT (about 70% of the total test group). Over 40,000 students have taken the EEE since it was first offered in 1973. The examination is developed by CSU faculty in coordination with the College-Level Examination Program of the College Board, and consists of 90 minutes of multiple-choice testing on the analysis and interpretation of literature, and two 45-minute writing samples calling for experiential-expressive writing as well as analytic writing.

The Upper-Division Writing Requirement. All degree candidates at each of the CSU campuses are now required to demonstrate writing proficiency before receiving the degree. The campuses certify this writing proficiency in different ways, and use different acronyms to describe their programs. Thus the

Junior English Proficiency Essah Test at San Francisco is called JEPET, while the Graduation writing Proficiency Examination at Long Beach is called GWPE; the upper-division course that meets the requirement at San Bernardino is called 495. (Unfamiliar acronyms is campus interviews will often refer to the local name of this requirement, which has had a substantial impact upon the writing programs on all campuses and which shows up in a number of interesting ways in our correlational data.)

A typical entering student will take either the EPT or the EEE. If the EPT score is too low, he or she will pass through one or more support programs at the remedial level; with a high EPT or EPT exemption, the student will enter directly into freshman composition. After freshman composition, or exemption with credit from freshman composition for a high EEE score, the student will meet the upper-division requirement as a junior or senior. Transfer students from community colleges do not generally take lower-division writing courses, but do need to meet the upper-division requirement in writing skills. The campuses have a wide variety of programs at all levels, including support services available to any student who finds his or her way to the learning center. However, different campuses have different programs and there was little or no attempt during the time of our data collection to regularize or restrict these offerings at the central level. (As we go to press with this report, declarations of intentions to reduce or even eliminate remedial support services are being made by officials in the Chancellor's Office.)

The setting and conditions we have described prevailed during the period of our research. Its rich variety of program features, within a common ground of requirements and tests, and supported by a network of concerned faculty, offered the context for the present research.

The Research Team

The project director and the faculty team bring many years of classroom teaching of college composition and of directing composition programs to the project. All five have been composition coordinators on their campuses and the project director also brings to the research nine years of experience as chair of an English department as well as a decade of experience as director of statewide testing programs. In addition, the faculty team brings different specializations within the field of English into the research: remedial instruction, English as a Second Language, linguistics, tutorial direction, rhetoric, and criticism.

A second perspective on the field is embodied by the associate project director, whose principal training has been in educational psychology and the research techniques of the social and behavioral sciences. She helped the faculty team find ways of developing and testing hypotheses and she was charged with primary responsibility for analysis. She also, as the only full-time project staff, has had principal responsibility for managing the project office and keeping the research on time and on track.

The third perspective on the study is provided by the Office of Analytic Studies (formerly called Institutional Research) of the CSU Chancellor's Office. This office, through matching support, has provided steady computer expertness and centralized data for the project through all of its phases. There is no way a project of this scope can be undertaken without major computer support. In addition, the centralized files for the huge CSU system provided a fund of baseline data with which the research could begin.

The names of the research team on the title page of this report thus represent a merging of statistical, research, and pedagogical perspectives upon college composition programs that has enriched the project and the intellectual development of all those involved. When we add to this mixture the full involvement of the English department chairs and composition directors on each of the nineteen CSU campuses, whose active participation in data gathering and active support for the project through their English Council have been unswerving, this research emerges as "collaborative" in every sense of the word.

In addition to the faculty research team described above, whose expertness and reputation have added credibility and experience to the entire project, we have convened two separate three-member advisory panels from outside the CSU to serve an external critical function. The panel for Phase I consisted of specialists in educational research design, psychology of writing, and tests and measurement: Evans Alloway, Educational Testing Service; Morris Holland, Psychology Department, UCLA; and James Popham, Education Department, UCLA. This panel reviewed progress and plans of the project in Spring 1981 and proposed several ways of moving from the descriptive materials of Phase I to the outcome measure data collection of Phase II. In particular, this panel urged us to strengthen the plans for gathering student outcome data, advice that led us to give particular attention to the elaborate essay testing effort in Phase II.

A second three-member advisory board has been serving the same function during Phases II and III. This panel has particular specialization in some of the areas peculiar to these phases: measurement and the teaching of writing, English department organization in relation to writing, and statistical operations. The Phases II and II panel consists of Miles Myers, Administrative Director of the Bay Area Writing Project, University of California, Berkeley, and author of a book on holistic scoring of writing; Richard Lloyd-Jones, Chair of the Department of English, University of Iowa, and President of the National Council of Teachers of English; and Frank Capell, California State Department of Health and author of reliability studies of writing measures and multi-level data analyses. The panel met as a group in January 1983 and has continued throughout Phase III as individuals to assist our work and the dissemination of our reports.

Conclusion

The generous funding by the National Institute of Education has allowed this unusual combination of teachers and scholars to take advantage of this unusually rich research setting in order to address important issues relating to college composition programs. The careful accumulation of data has led to the findings set out in this report, which we hope will be of use to practitioners as well as researchers.

CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

What Do We Know About College Writing Programs?

This research project is designed to meet the need for information about college-level programs in composition. Program administrators and faculty need to know what kinds of program choices exist and how effectively those choices have worked in particular institutional settings with specified student and staff populations. Our search of the educational research and the English education literature uncovered little available and generally applicable knowledge on this subject. Much of that literature was given over to reports of the successes and (rarely) failures of specific curricular or service programs. The problem with these course descriptions and evaluations of individual programs is that their usefulness in other contexts is always in doubt.

A few reports, described below, are more general in scope and provide some insight into the issues and important factors to consider in an examination of any program of writing instruction. These studies have sought to describe the national scene in college English, most often through national survey data and selective interviews. We do not find any attempts to validate or evaluate these descriptions of program features in terms of actual impact or success in helping faculty to teach better or students to write better. Thus, they stop short of providing the sort of data-based recommendations that can help composition directors, composition committees, department chairs, college administrators, and instructors make decisions among a range of options whose success may be closely linked to particular settings or policies or personnel.

One of the earliest systematic studies of college composition programs was published in 1963. The Albert Kitzhaber report on college composition begins with a discussion of the contradictory goals or purposes that then (as well as now) lay behind the curriculum and instruction in college writing courses. Kitzhaber describes "therapy" programs as those which take as their mission remedying the ill-prepared entering freshman student, thus providing a "service" to the students and for the faculty in other departments by teaching these students to write with "reasonable ease, precision, and correctness." The second set of goals for college composition is concerned with cognitive development rather than correctness. From this perspective, composition programs are designed "to focus the student's attention on fundamental principles of clear thinking and the clear and effective written expression of that thinking, and to give him disciplined practice in the principles."

These two perspectives on composition programs, with their different if not necessarily competing goals, suggest differences in locating the responsibility for teaching students to be competent college writers. In the first case, where writing instruction is performed as a service, primary responsibility for the success of this service is normally left to the English department. In the second case, where writing instruction is part of the general intellectual training received in college, other departments share the responsibility; they should "foster the same discipline but direct it toward the varying demands of the specific subject matters."

In addition to these contrasting views of writing instruction purposes and responsibilities, Kitzhaber identifies the variety of English department specialties (in every part of the discipline with the exception of writing) that usually guide writing programs because of the particular expertness of the department chair or composition director: semantics, logic, rhetoric, linguistics, literature, and literary criticism. He also points out the lack of "proof" of the cause-effect relationship between instructional activities derived from any of these particular specialties and gains in student achievement. He describes difficulties that await prospective researchers because of their inability to identify or control effects due to the variety of intervening variables in students' history and experiences and effects from the particular personality traits and teaching competencies of instructors. Further, he raises the issue of sensitivity and validity of measures of student gains in competence as a result of freshman composition.

After discussing these issues and problems, Kitzhaber reports the results of his own data-gathering effort, the purpose of which was to describe the variety in writing programs offered in American four-year universities. Kitzhaber collected syllabuses from 95 universities and analyzed those course descriptions in terms of the expressed goals, content, progression in instructional content, and texts. Interested in the veracity of these syllabuses, he paid follow-up visits to eighteen of the campuses to determine the extent to which courses were implemented as described.

Most notable from the analyses of syllabuses were the variety of approaches to writing instruction, the lack of rigor and scholarship in the selection of texts for composition as compared to the standard fare for other college courses, and the apparent lack of confidence in the competence of instructors. He also noted that campus size was a key factor determining staffing patterns, particularly in the use of part-time instructors and lecturers.

When Kitzhaber tried to apply some of the patterns he had discovered to an evaluation of the Dartmouth composition program, he ran into problems of measurement that he could not surmount. The evaluation method he chose, an elaborate error count of student written drafts, did not take into account the increasing quality or complexity of the writing tasks given to students as they move through college. His "demonstration" that Dartmouth seniors write less well than freshmen serves as a warning to evaluators that more sophisticated and more complex measurement devices than error counts are required if results are to be credible.

Kitzhaber's work is valuable less for its evaluations or descriptive information, the validity of which may no longer hold (although we may note here that we discovered many of the same patterns that he did twenty years earlier), than for its identification of key variables that ought to be considered in the investigation of college writing programs. Clearly, campus size and the philosophy or goals of the composition program are important factors in determining what takes place in classrooms and who is doing the teaching. He also suggests attention to the following: training of the staff, texts, amount of writing assigned, where writing is done (in class or out), and the direction, structure, and guidance given to students.

A decade later, Thomas Wilcox conducted "The National Survey of Undergraduate Programs in English," sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and funded by the United States Office of Education. Like Kitzhaber, Wilcox (1973) collected survey data (questionnaires from English department chairs) and interview data. While Wilcox studied composition programs, he did so as part of his larger concern with the administration of English department programs and the operation of English departments within the college context. His survey data describe the makeup of department staffs in terms of status categories and the reward systems in effect. He notes the influence of campus size upon staffing demands. On the larger campuses, he finds the need for specialists in literary fields, the desire for distinguished "scholars in the field [of literature]," the overuse of cheap labor for writing instruction available from part-time and nontenure-track appointments and graduate assistants. On the smaller campuses, he notes the need for generalists, the emphasis on effective teaching rather than publishing, and the tendency toward "top-heaviness" characterized by a predominantly stable, tenured staff isolated from "new ideas and enthusiasms" presumably generated by newer and younger staff members.

In contrast to Kitzhaber, who concentrated upon course content and instruction in composition, Wilcox concentrates his reporting on the administrative properties of English departments, assuming that these characteristics and decisions also affect the nature of instruction. The key departmental issues he identifies include department autonomy, teacher evaluation, staffing, and philosophies underlying composition and remedial courses. Like Kitzhaber, Wilcox recognizes a relationship between campus size and staffing patterns, and between philosophies about writing instruction and the organization and content of writing courses. The new information in the Wilcox study concerns the evaluation of instructors and the organization of writing courses.

In describing information on teacher evaluation, Wilcox raises two issues: desired characteristics and their measurement. His survey data suggest some degree of consensus about the characteristics evaluators seek in instructors. The two descriptions receiving endorsement by more than 75 percent of the Wilcox sample are 1) "stimulation and motivation," and 2) "knowledge and mastery of subject matter." Following these two values, the remaining three top selections are 3) "fresh ideas and critical insights" (45%), 4) "enthusiasm and interest" (40%), and 5) "rapport with students" (39%). Interestingly, the five most valued teacher traits suggest a greater concern for the general characteristics of good teachers than in specialized competence or particular knowledge or approach in composition.

Wilcox next asked the department administrators in his study how they go about measuring these characteristics, so generally valued. Here he describes the basic problem of "how to obtain reliable and accurate evidence of what actually occurs in each instructor's classroom." The most common source of information cited by the survey respondents was informal personal contact with the instructors (93%). The second most common answer was the review of assignments, exams, and teaching materials (51%). Curiously, for 1973, student evaluations of instructors were cited by only 40 percent of the respondents and class observations by only 36 percent. Other choices revealed by the survey included informal contacts with students, student-published evaluations of staff, solicited colleague opinions, comparisons in grading among instructors for the same course, and behavior during department meetings.

Wilcox also inquired into the question of course organization. He asked his survey population the degree of course uniformity across instructors and how this comparability was achieved. From his findings, it appears clear that course consistency is very general indeed and rarely enforced. Top among the choices for methods of establishing course consistency are the following: staff meetings (68%), use of syllabuses (62%), common texts decided upon by committee (62%), and, less popularly, common exams (22%), common lectures (12%), and common theme grading (1.2%). For Wilcox, these findings lead to the unanswered question of whether or not there is "a right, true, or best in teaching English."

When he focuses upon composition, Wilcox reports much the same emphases and distinctions in his sample of department administrators as did Kitzhaber ten years earlier. Again, the issue of "service and therapy" stands out from the broader intellectual goals for writing instruction. Wilcox expands upon Kitzhaber's terms, describing the growth beyond simple therapy for the ill-prepared students, to "exercising and educating . . . coaching students for future occasions which may demand the use of language and confronting them with present occasions which require the use of all their mental faculties." Wilcox also presents data on the growth in needed, clearly remedial coursework. These courses are described by Wilcox as predominantly a matter of practice and drill in mechanics with writing limited to paragraphs done in class and with texts limited to "junior high school primers" or comparable lightweight fare.

While these two studies, Kitzhaber (1963) and Wilcox (1973), are landmarks in their sparse field of inquiry, they pre-date what Richard Young has called the "paradigm shift" in writing instruction occasioned by the intense interest in and instructional research about the writing process (Cooper and Odell, 1978). Thus their information may be out of date and only of historical interest. Fortunately, similar work has recently been completed at the University of Texas at Austin (Witte, Meyer, Miller, Faigley, 1981).

The Austin research team is primarily interested in the development of evaluation guidelines and methods for colleges to use in evaluating composition programs (Witte and Faigley, 1983). A preliminary activity in their project was a national survey of college composition program administrators. This national profile includes and distinguishes results from two- and four-year colleges as well as public and private universities. Witte and his colleagues have reported the range of practices in 1) writing course content and sequence, 2) staffing of writing courses, 3) textbooks and other teaching materials, 4) instructional activities, 5) student evaluation and proficiency testing, and 6) faculty evaluation and development. Again, as in the Kitzhaber and Wilcox studies, institutional size seemd to be a clear factor in distinguishing among actual practices in these six areas.

The update of instructional information by the Austin team is remarkably unremarkable in the light of the major changes that have occurred in composition theory and in research-based recommendations for instructional activities since the 1960s (Cooper and Odell, 1978; White, 1985). The Austin data describe the continued popularity of grammar and rhetoric texts in beginning composition in both two-year and four-year colleges and universities; the only real distinction is that universities also report greater use of non-fiction anthologies.

The new information on staffing is perhaps more interesting because of the care with which the Austin team has distinguished among faculty status categories. The result of their care has been the acquisition of data supporting some of the current, otherwise unsupported opinions about differences in writing instruction traceable to differences in staff status. For example, the data reveal disparities in faculty development opportunities for full-time, tenured and nontenure-track faculty. This finding further demonstrates some evidence of interaction with the size of the institution, most likely because the larger institutions employ a greater number of part-time, nontenure-track instructors. The universities seem to be doing the most for all categories of staffing, though slightly more energy was directed toward the part-timers. Two-year colleges, on the other hand, aim most of their workshop activity toward the tenured and tenure-track full-timers.

Another particularly relevant aspect of the Austin survey data is the self-report by composition program directors on the successes of their programs. Several program components were mentioned over and over by the questionnaire respondents. These include 1) the independent writing lab, 2) teacher training efforts, 3) peer tutoring and other collaborative learning, and 4) placement procedures. The respondents also listed a fairly consistent set of "successful outcomes" for their programs, including 1) teaching students to write clear, effective prose for different audiences, 2) getting teachers to teach writing as a process, and 3) involving tenured faculty in teaching writing.

Of the seven successful outcomes most often cited, four relate to program policy and organization. Clearly these program-level decisions can have impact upon instructional success; just as clearly, program outcomes encompass more than student gains:

> That relatively few directors cited any one successful aspect of college writing programs suggests that those programs vary considerably from one institutional context to

> another, from one department to another, from one director to another. . . . We also found considerable evidence of a variety of approaches to writing program administration, with some directors investing considerable energy in one area whileothers focus on another area. . . . If the contexts for writing programs differ from one institution to another, it is difficult to say--on the basis of the statements we read--in what aspects of writing programs, directors around the country ought to invest their energies.
>
> (Witte, Meyer, Miller, Faigley, 1981, pp. 103-104)

To this date, the most valuable aspect of the research published by the Austin team has been its attention to the process of evaluation. While some volumes are now in press which may present useful statistical analyses, the two principal researchers have published a small but important booklet on program evaluation derived from their research experience (Witte and Faigley, 1983) warning against the oversimplifications and faulty designs that undercut many well-intentioned evaluation designs.

This cautionary booklet of 78 pages (with an additional 38 pages of notes and bibliography) describes four flawed evaluation designs, mostly based on pre-test/post-test models, including one prepared by the authors in an unsuccessful attempt to avoid the problems they saw so clearly. Their five-level view of the components of a writing program is more inclusive than any so far proposed. It begins with 1) the cultural and social context and circles inward through 2) the institutional context, 3) the program structure and administration, 4) the content or curriculum, to arrive at 5) instruction. The booklet concludes with over thirty "questions for evaluators," designed to keep any evaluator from taking too narrow a view of the subject. The authors explicitly caution against reliance upon a single approach or a single measurement device:

> Evaluation studies, including our own, which were based on the quantitative model have yielded few major insights concerning the teaching of writing or the operation of writing programs. Indeed, the findings of most evaluations of writing programs and courses hardly justify the massive efforts required to conduct the research. The implications for would-be evaluators of either writing programs or writing courses is clear enough: no matter how carefully conceived and constructed the design or how sophisticated the methods of analysis, evaluations must be based on more than pretest and posttest writing samples. Evaluations of writing programs and courses, if they are to result in valid and reliable judgments, must employ a variety of methods and procedures.
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> (1983, p. 38)

Relationship of Our Findings to the Related Literature

The three studies described above report on the state of English composition programs at three junctures in time: 1963, 1973, and 1981. They have each attempted to portray the spectrum of actual practices in several areas of program operations, such as staffing patterns, course content and texts, student and faculty evaluation, and faculty development. Each of these studies relied almost exclusively upon responses to multiple-choice questionnaire items for accumulating data, though Kitzhaber and Wilcox also sought backup interview data on a small subsample of cases. Further, each of these studies confined their sample to composition program or English department data. The most recent study is the most pointed about the limitations of conclusions to be drawn from limited perspectives.

Our own descriptive data also were derived from questionnaire and interview. However, anticipating the view of the Austin team, we began with a variety of perspectives upon the composition program. Our interviews began with a variety of administrators, including English department chairs, composition program directors, remedial course directors, learning and/or tutorial center directors, heads of writing programs under the auspices of Chicano, Pan-African, or Asian studies departments, Deans of Arts and Sciences or of Schools of Humanities, and Academic Vice Presidents. We believe that this wealth of perspective has allowed us to better understand the institutional context within which the writing programs operate.

Further, our interviews with program directors indicated that their knowledge of instructional practices among writing program staff tends to be limited to part-time or nontenure-track instructors and graduate assistants. Tenured and tenure-track faculty appear to be unsupervised and largely unevaluated for their composition teaching. Clearly, this calls into question the generalizability of the questionnaire and interview data of all three studies described above.

We addressed this concern with particular care. In the first place, we developed a survey questionnaire for the faculty teaching writing both within and outside of English departments; secondly, we made particular efforts to increase the return rate of the questionnaires and to ensure participation by the tenured faculty. Our success at these efforts allowed us to develop the factor analyses of the responses which are given below and to analyze significant differences between the patterns of response of the tenure-track faculty and the part-time or temporary faculty (see Chapter Eight).

Finally, we need to emphasize that, unlike its predecessors, our study has ventured beyond description into analyses. We have gathered a substantial quantity of outcome data for students and for faculty, and present below those aspects of composition programs most (and least) associated with successful outcomes. Our definition of "outcomes" has attempted to be sensitive to the broad and complex goals of college-level writing instruction as well as to the basic underlying goal--to improve student writing performance.

What Do We Know About Evaluating Writing Programs?

Two recent reports bear upon our goals and methodology. Davis, Scriven, and Thomas (1981) combine the issues pertaining to evaluation in general with those arising in the evaluation of writing instruction programs. This volume is based upon the direct and frustrating experience of an evaluation team headed by Michael Scriven as they attempted to "evaluate" the "outcomes" of the (then) Bay Area Writing Project (BAWP) for writing teachers and their students. Despite generous funding, ample time, and substantial expertness, this team could not develop conclusive findings according to traditional patterns. According to the funding agency, the Carnegie Corporation, "at the end of their work, the Scriven team delivered no less than 32 separate reports on BAWP activities, none of which was able to present direct cause-and-effect statistics."[1] No doubt reflecting this evaluation experience, the Scriven team recommends in its evaluation handbook (as they call it) an evaluation agenda that can cope with the difficult measurement problems posed by a writing program.

The first of these problem areas is validity in both the methodology and measures. In his chapter on basic evaluation concepts, Scriven notes

> . . . in the evaluation of composition instruction there has been a most serious failure to deal with the most central aspect of the issue of validity. To understand why this has occurred, it is essential to understand the peculiar status of mastery of an *instrumental intellectual skill* like writing or reading or reasoning or speaking Spanish, by contrast with mastery of a *substantive intellectual subject* like English literature or the history of philosophy or special relativity theory. The skills are in some sense content-free--loosely speaking, they represent knowing *how*

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[1] "Teaching and Learning the Art of Composition: The Bay Area Writing Project," *Carnegie Quarterly*, 27 *2* (1979), p. 7.

> to do something without knowing that something is the case. The first problem that affects validity arises from the terrible temptation to try to convert the skill into a subject, because subjects are easier to talk about, to teach, and to test. . . . So the evaluator should take great care not to confuse content knowledge with instrumental skills.
>
> (Davis, Scriven, and Thomas, 1981, p. 37)

For Scriven, this distinction in the nature of the instructional content of writing has ramifications for assessment of instruction and instructional gains in writing skill. For example, he appeals to teachers and evaluators to pay careful attention to topic and rating systems used in assessing student skills by essay sample. Throughout, the handbook emphasizes a broader definition for writing instruction than has traditionally been studied. Citing the recent plethora of research on individual cognitive processes in writing and on process-oriented instruction,[2] the authors argue for attention to other valuable components in successful writing, beyond first-draft text production: 1) motivation, 2) linguistic competence, 3)audience sensitivity, 4) understanding the demands of different rhetorical purposes, 5) competence in the composing and revising processes, and 6) competence in developing and applying metaplans or strategies to complete the writing task. This broad approach to instruction and learning requires that assessment as well reach beyond student writing performance to include indicators of attitudes and beliefs about writing and follow-up indicators such as subsequent course enrollments and grades. A further implication, one we adapted to our research, is that a single essay score, from one perspective, is likely to be more limited and limiting than several scores from several perspectives.

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[2] See, for example, Bereiter, Scardamalia, and Braceweel, 1979; Bruce, Collins, Rubin, and Gentner, 1978; Flower and Hayes, 1980; Nold, 1980. These citations are expanded in the Bibliography following this chapter.

Beyond the increased validity of the evaluation design, there are several advantages to including a variety of indicators:

> . . . growth in writing occurs slowly; changes are more noticeable at two- and four-year intervals than during the course of a semester. Further, attitude changes often precede improvement in skills and can be considered short-term indicators of possible future changes. . . . And, measuring students' attitudes and beliefs about writing can provide a richer understanding--potential explanations--of more subtle program effects. Attitude measures thus allow us to take into account some important aspects of learning processes.
>
> (Davis, Scriven, and Thomas, 1981, p. 95)

After student-centered changes in writing, thinking and attitudes, the next set of items on the Scriven team's agenda focuses on teachers--their background, training and beliefs, and their teaching methods. The traditional evaluation design ignores these matters and their potential usefulness to the evaluation of writing programs: "It ignores the potential for evaluation procedures to act as powerful tools in program improvement and staff development." Among the kinds of teacher-centered variables recommended, the Scriven team discusses 1) classroom procedures, 2) responses to student writing, 3) writing assignments, 4) expectancies for student learning, 5) knowledge of composition theory, 6) philosophy of composition, 7) professional activities and leadership roles, and 8) formal training. While some of these teacher-oriented issues deal directly with the classroom process, most of them are likely to affect teacher decision-making with regard to curriculum, materials, methods, course goals, and other programmatic concerns.

The third category of agenda items includes program administration and unintended outcomes from the program. The first of these issues suggests a policy focus, that is, the utility of particular kinds of evaluative information for making policy decisions about programs. The key dimensions in this area cover the educational and institutional context of the program and the administrative responsibilities for it.

Data about the educational and institutional context should attempt to characterize the setting in which the program operates by describing the support supplied by larger units, such as the department, school or college. These resources can be of many types: fiscal, personnel, physical facilities, incentives and rewards, and so on. In addition to investigating system support, a thorough program evaluation must consider the constraints which operate on the program, such as financial restrictions, policy decisions and staff limitations.

When the Scriven team speaks of administrative responsibilities, it includes the structures for communication within the program as well as between program and institution. These structures may be active committees, regular meetings, or other forums for communicating ideas and problems, finding solutions, and formulating policies and plans. Also an administrative concern is the ongoing development or maintenance of staff skills through faculty development or in-house evaluations.

The second issue, unintended outcomes, is an often overlooked aspect of program evaluation. The Scriven team refers to these unplanned results as "side effects":

> The search for side effects underscores the importance of looking at what a program has actually done, not what it has intended . . . it's important . . . to find out whether they have succeeded in what they have been trying to do. But goals shouldn't be the sole focus of an evaluation. They may be too vague, too easy to attain. The focus of an evaluation should be on what the program accomplished, whether intended or not.
>
> (Davis, Scriven, and Thomas, 1981, p. 142)

Uncovering the side effects is difficult since they are clearly not a conscious, documented part of the program. The key to discovering such results is in allowing for input on topics other than those included in stated program goals. Open-ended questions, observations, and interviews can pick up incidents or circumstances whose occurrence or nature shares some relationship to the existence of the program. A common, beneficial side effect of an innovative program is what is called the "spread of effect." That is, often the program is able to exert an influence on people outside the program staff and participants. This often occurs where the program operates in close proximity to other, regular instructional units. For example, where the composition program operates within the English department, or where composition staff share facilities with other staff from other humanities departments, we might find greater interest, support, and involvement in "writing across the disciplines" by outside faculty. Another noticeable "spread of effect" might be an increase in knowledge about composition research on the part of regular tenured literature faculty who have been required to share the composition instruction load, and thus interact, with recently graduated temporary faculty.

The work of the Scriven team is an outstanding aid to the evaluation of composition programs because of the careful elaboration of target issues and their measurement. Even though this handbook must be supplemented by the cautions about pre-test/post-test evaluation designs emphasized by Witte and Faigley (1983), the Scriven team has set out an indispensable guide for evaluators. However, their work seems focused almost entirely upon student and teacher activities and outcomes. This reflects the predominant interest in the composition field, elementary and secondary school instruction. At the postsecondary level, instruction programs are under greater influence from the several layers of administration above them and from the competing needs and interests of other departments around them.

Thus although the recommendations of the Scriven team are necessary, they are not sufficient for describing the range of program issues in postsecondary composition instruction. Our final source of program evaluation recommendations, the Rand study of innovative elementary and secondary school programs (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978; Berman, Greenwood, McLaughlin, and Pincus, 1975), complements the studies of composition programs by its findings about ways of bringing about educational change. The Rand study aimed at discovering the salient factors that determined the successful continuation of innovative programs funded with federal seed money. In doing so, the study uncovered patterns of success that suggest a theoretical model, "a model of educational change." The key element in this model is a process referred to as "mutual adaptation." It is this model and the mutual adaptation process, specifically, that we find complete our understanding of factors affecting program effectiveness.

Berman and McLaughlin base their model on three categories or factors as these categories affect program operations: 1) federal input, 2) project characteristics, and 3) institutional setting. Clearly, contextual influences are more important from this perspective than they were in the Scriven team's recommendations for evaluation. As Berman and Mclaughlin amplify each of these three factors, the complexity of context for understanding programs becomes apparent.

The first category, federal funding, concerns the regulations and policies attached to the award of funds as well as the quantity of funds themselves. Other funding agency influences might include provision of technical assistance or other supportive resources. Curiously, differences in the funding did not relate to project success, whether that success was measured as teacher change, student gains, or simple continuation of the project.

In their second set of categories, project characteristics, Berman and McLaughlin expand the usual conceptualization of programs. The Rand model includes goals, methods, and materials under the rubric of "educational methods." "Scope of change" describes the breadth and depth of the innovation, that is, the "_type_ of change required in teaching practice, and the _amount_ of extra effort required of teachers." While differences in educational methods did not yield any significance as an indicator of project success, the scope of change attempted was an important indicator:

> . . . our data indicate that teachers rise to challenges. Ambitious and demanding innovations seem more likely to elicit the commitment of teachers than routine projects. This is so in part because these projects appeal to the teachers' professionalism . . .
>
> (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978, p. 25)

A corollary to this finding revealed that project staff need to have a clear understanding of their objectives in the project. This effect of clarity turns up in the implementation of the project, but not by means of written statements so much as through careful preparation of the staff for carrying out project activities: "practical, concrete training activities that permit project staff to understand the significance of project precepts as they apply them to their own classrooms."

The third category of project characteristics describes the implementation of project operations. Perhaps most interesting here are the strategies that proved ineffective. Many of these are familiar and popular, despite their ineffectiveness: 1) use of outside consultants, 2) packaged management approaches, 3) one-shot, preimplementation training, 4) pay for training, 5)formal evaluations, and 6) comprehensive applications (breadth of scope of change).

In contrast, a group of less popular strategies were found to produce "major, positive effects on project outcomes and continuation": 1) concrete, "hands-on" training, ongoing throughout the life of the project, 2) classrooom assistance from project or local district staff, 3) observation of similar projects in other settings, 4) regular project meetings, 5) teacher participation in decision-making for the project, 6) local materials development, and 7) principal (administrator) participation in training. These strategies do not guarantee success; the Rand researchers are quick to point out that these strategies must be well executed on site in order to contribute to project success.

There is a clear theme in the two lists of successful and ineffective implementation strategies in this second category. Where there is "local ownership" or "investment" in the project operations, there is a climate for success, a climate of motivation, support, knowledge, and patience or tolerance for the hard times and demands that accompany any major systematic innovation. Where outsiders are brought in as experts, where there is little room for participation either because of prepackaged materials, or inadequate training and knowledge, and where the changes are too sweeping, there is less commitment to and effort in project implementation, and greater confusion and demoralization among project staff.

In their third category of variables affecting project success, Berman and McLaughlin describe the complex contextual issues of the "institutional setting" in which the innovation exists. It is this category of variables describing the local institutional setting that had "the major influence on project outcomes and continuation." These variables covered 1) organizational climate and leadership, 2) school and teacher characteristics, and 3) management capacity and support from local district administration.

Organizational climate refers to the quality of the relationship among project staff and local administrators. Sharing ideas and working as a unified team helped project teachers maintain a "critical mass that could overcome both task and emotional need," that is, create a working support group. In addition to support from project colleagues, the active support of principals, that is local on-site administrators, vastly improved the likelihood of success for the project in meeting its goals, in trouble-free implementation, and in maintenance beyond the start-up year. The key here is "active" administrative support:

> The principal's unique contribution to implementation

> lies not in "how to do it" advice better offered by project directors, but in giving moral support to the staff and in creating an organizational climate that gives the project "legitimacy." This role is particularly demanding for ambitious projects . . . [which] can be viewed as a radical and undesirable departure from the school norm unless the principal actively supports them and runs interference.
>
> (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978, p. 31)

Berman and McLaughlin find the roles of principal and project director crucial to project success, but in different phases. When the project is starting and staff must acquire new skills and attitudes, the project director's leadership and subject area competence greatly affect the success of the implementation phase, of starting and regularizing operations. After the project is successfully underway and seeks support for continuation, the principal's special administrative experience and power determine the success of the continuation attempt. In fact, Berman and McLaughlin feel so strongly about the principal's role in supporting attempts to bring about change that they refer to the principal as "the gatekeeper of change."

School and teacher characteristics found to be influential in project success did not include the usual demographic distinctions according to ethnic, economic and social strata, nor was staff stability significant. Instead, the Rand study describes teachers with strong "subject orientation," as opposed to "student-centered orientation." Subject-oriented teachers were less easily involved in innovations, which they saw as challenging their responsibilities to cover particular content.

Two teacher traits proved unusually interesting in their effects: years teaching and sense of efficacy. The greater the teaching experience of the staffs, the less likely the project was to realize its goals or to improve student achievement; these experienced teachers were less receptive to suggestions about changing their teaching behaviors or learning new approaches. "Sense of efficacy," as defined in the Rand study, refers to teachers' beliefs in their ability to teach even their most difficult students. This attitude reflects, to some degree, teachers' feelings about their professional competence as well as the context in which they work. This trait was positively related to the successful implementation and continuation of innovative projects; the presence of teachers who expected to succeed in the context of the project helped ensure that success.

District management, which is analogous to university administration in our study, was an important variable identified by the Rand study in continuation of a project, often smoothing over the political road along which projects move from innovative to regular status:

> . . . supportive districts designed, from the beginning, continuation strategies that were aimed at maintaining the project in the face of financial, personnel, and political uncertainties.
>
> (Berman and McLaughlin, 1978, p. 33)

In sum, the factors the Rand team investigated revealed unexpected differences in their impact upon project success. In determining program success, research has traditionally concentrated its evaluative focus on demographic influences (socioeconomic status, ethnicity), project goals, and student outcomes. The Rand report suggests that success is tempered by several variables which share a common, administrative coloring. The special roles of key leaders in the project, on site and in the local administrative agency (district), together with teachers' amenability to change, far outweighed other possible factors affecting the successful start and maintenance of a project fostering change. These key factors were 1) active involvement in supporting project efforts, 2) local "ownership" of the project through local input in decisions, development, and training, and 3) "mutual adaptation": the shared burden of change, as the project adapts to the constraints, resources, and characteristics of the setting, and the institutional setting accommodates the project.

While the Rand study seems less clearly related to our study of program effectiveness in college composition instruction, we believed the nature of the more effective programs were likely to be innovative and subject to the same problems and influences as those projects investigated by the Rand team. In particular, the group of campuses in our study, those in The California State University, are typical of American higher education, facing new challenges and new knowledge in the area of writing instruction; they are operating under new remedial, placement, and exit competency requirements which have led to program changes. Although as this report goes to press, in 1986, the CSU (again like most of American higher education) is reconsidering the depth of its commitment to underprepared students, during the time of our research considerable innovation was taking place. Seed money for remedial projects had only recently been provided by the state, determined by newly-developed placement test scores. Further, the available staff in English departments consists primarily of professors trained in literature, many of whom view with great distress the increasing pressure upon them to teach composition courses. Also, composition staffs exhibit an interesting mix of newer and older faculty and a considerable difference from campus to campu in forms of administrative support. These characteristics suggest the value of the Rand study for informing our own investigation into the effects of the setting in which programs operate.

Implications of the Literature Review for Our Research

Our literature review, though limited, suggested to us the potential value and likely success of our study and offered several recommendations affecting our research questions and design.

First, the literature on composition disproportionately reports on instructional research about an individual's writing process and on elementary and secondary writing classrooms. The college composition studies summarized here (Kitzhaber, 1963; Wilcox, 1973; Witte, Meyer, Miller, and Faigley, 1981) have had to begin at the beginning, describing current practices, philosophies and theories. Unfortunately, they have also had to make the hard choice between breadth and depth in the information they gathered and sought to understand. Each study opted for breadth, securing national survey data from program and department administrators only. In our research design, we have found their data useful in listing categories of activities, settings, personnel, and instruction. However, in appealing to the broad sample and employing the limited multiple-choice format, survey researchers have sacrificed the descriptive detail that enlivens category labels and distinguishes among variations in actual practices within those labels. For instance, we find it frustrating to know that discussion of revising and editing occurs "very often" in the first semester writing courses, since we do not know how many of those responses are based upon newer theories of the recursive nature of revision during writing and how many are based upon concern for surface correctness and reduction of editing errors. Most frustrating of all has been the lack of meaningful evaluative information in previous studies; while it is useful to see what is going on, it is much more useful to discover what aspects of composition instruction are the most (and least) effective. The literature has cautioned us against too simple a measurement design in evaluation even as it provides a series of flawed evaluation designs (Witte and Faigley, 1983) as models to avoid in our search for evidence of effectiveness.

Clearly, the major studies we have reviewed were not intended to produce the sort of in-depth knowledge we have been seeking, and we do not fault them for not fulfilling goals they never held. Their findings are nevertheless valuable because by "counting" the popularity or frequency of use of various categories, these researchers allow us to make better-informed decisions about worthwhile variables for our own study. We do believe that the time has come for a closer look at the current state of college composition. Fifteen years of exciting new developments in instructional theory, methods, and materials suggest the importance of a study which can get below the surface structures of operations to see to what degree college writing programs now reflect these developments, and to what degree these (and other) developments have made a difference to students and faculty. Thus, we have gathered descriptive data with greater depth than any previous study and have combined a series of outcome measures with these data in ways not readily available to studies before the computer age.

The Scriven team focused upon elementary and secondary writing instruction and upon programs to improve that instruction. Nevertheless, their expansive description of outcomes, beyond the usual narrow reliance upon student test score gains, helped us select and refine other categories in the interviews and faculty survey. The Austin team attended closely to the context of college composition programs, particularly to the linking of external elements to the internal working of the program. The Rand study provided the missing link, evaluating the effectiveness of the institutional context for promoting innovative program goals in the schools: first, highlighting the degree of influence such factors wielded and, second, suggesting the practical range in reality for these factors.

Together, these reports also have suggested to us the value of and need for expanding our focus beyond the usual sources of data (administrators in the department) to include English department faculty (at all status levels, including part-time), faculty teaching writing outside the English department, and key administrators at all levels of campus involvement in writing programs and evaluation.

Theoretical Framework

In the light of our review of the related literature, we developed the hypotheses that are the intellectual foundations for our work. Since college level writing programs have not been well studied previously, and since conflicting theories of the methods and even goals of such instruction abound, we needed to advance a series of tentative hypotheses in order to proceed to gather manageable data. At the same time, we tried to be alert to the limitations of these hypotheses and to gather sufficient data to allow other hypotheses to emerge.

It was the collective experience of the research team that program decisions have a profound impact upon college writing instruction. Despite the university tradition of independent teaching responsibility--still very much in force even for many minimally trained new faculty--it is plain that the teaching of composition differs in important ways from campus to campus and that these differences can be described as programmatic. The fact that faculty involved in a writing program often do not perceive it as a coherent whole, or that program decisions often emerge from university tradition or merely personal experience, in no way denies the fact that almost all American colleges and universities have writing programs. Although our review of the research shows no previous evaluative efforts, the varying features of these programs are well established as phenomena to be described, with presumed effects upon the students and faculty participating in them. We based our research on the existence of these different programmatic features, whose details and patterns we needed to define in depth and whose effects could be compared by a variety of outcome measures.

Thus, we set out to describe, from our theoretical knowledge and practical experience, a "taxonomy" of writing program features. Creating this descriptive framework helped us define our subject and became the first of a series of tasks focused on the gathering of usable data. This framework led to a collection of "Fact Sheets" from each campus, and, in turn, generated the interview protocols we followed during our campus visits. In each case, we sought key information about campus programs that would fill out our preliminary descriptive frame in order to move toward the goal of indentifying differences that might turn out to be significant. We needed to move carefully between using "best guesses" about important phenomena to observe and recognizing the possibility that unforeseen hypotheses might well arise from the data if we were not too bound to our preliminary views.

This process of developing premises in order to gather data, which are than used to generate new hypotheses as they are analyzed, turned out to be a delicate and creative procedure. We kept before us the clear practical goal for the project as a whole: we are seeking to offer to program directors and policy makers information which will help them to order or plan writing instruction activities heretofore organized (if organized at all) by tradition or by the personal experiences of a series of composition directors.

We needed to keep in mind as well the fact that the relation of campus writing program policy to actual classroom instruction is far from clear. Our field interviews have confirmed the experience of the research team that some program directors do not know how much program policy is actually being carried out by individual instructors, particularly where those instructors are tenure-track or tenured faculty. The faculty survey was developed to give us self-report information on actual practice, and that survey became yet another view on writing programs, this time provided by the teaching faculty, including those with tenure.

Although there have been major changes in both theory and practice in composition instruction over the last two decades, we expected that much of that change has failed to work its way into compositions classrooms. (The survey results confirmed that view, though not as dramatically as we expected.) Nevertheless, we felt the nineteen campuses in our sample would offer a sufficient range of organization, policies, and effectiveness to allow us to address issues of program implementation, curricular innovation, and faculty development in this rapidly changing field. Indeed, a continuing question in the field is how to develop programs that will urge, or even mandate, up-to-date knowledge for composition instructors. As we began our research, however, we could not assume consistent connections between program policies and instruction in the field of writing. We thus decided to "triangulate" our data gathering activities, that is, to accumumlate different perspectives on the same phenomena as a way of confirming the reality we were describing.

All of these problems--the vital interplay of theory and data-gathering, the shifting nature of the reality we were describing, the gap between theory and practice, the difficulty of defining our field of inquiry, and so on--reminded us of the theoretical difficulties of the Rand study. Their goal, to "provide an orderly and logical description of how change occurs," called for a similar process of movement between theoretical and practical assumptions: "this process of developing and testing theory is particularly important when there is no clear connection between policies and results, when goals themsevles are unclear, when the means or technologies used to promote change are hard to describe and vary over time and place, and when the policies being studied are often only a small factor in the many forces that affect outcomes" (Berman, Greenwood, McLaughlin, and Pincus, 1975, p. 6). Our study, like the Rand project, is intended to develop an orderly way of viewing an extraordinarily complex area now using major amounts of public as well as private funds.

Our study of college level writing programs has progressed through three stages: 1) developing descriptions of program components for a wide variety of institutions and students, as they were implemented during the period of the project (specifically for the academic years 1981-83); 2) developing an approach to detect such outcome differences as may be traceable to program differences; 3) developing and publishing materials to assist in program change at the point in the institution most responsive and most receptive to this information, that is, for English department chairs and composition directors. The first phase was basically descriptive; the second, evaluative; the third has been both theoretical (what do the differences in outcomes mean?) and practical (how can these differences be explained in useful ways?). Each phase has in turn offered to those charged with policy or program responsibility in the area of college writing instruction systematically derived information on which to base decisions.

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CHAPTER FOUR

TAXONOMY OF WRITING PROGRAM FEATURES

Development of the Taxonomy

Because no commonly accepted definition of the term "writing program" is to be found in the literature on composition, our research team was obliged to formulate a working definition to focus our study. We might have justified a definition that includes the entire liberal arts degree since, increasingly, faculty in all disciplines employ writing in their courses not only as a recorder of things learned but also as a mode of learning. Obviously, a definition that would have required us to include the entire university curriculum and faculty was rejected as impractical. On the other hand, restricting the definition to single writing classes, as designed by relatively autonomous instructors, would have eliminated the possibility of arriving at the kind of useful generalizations that our study aimed to produce.

We quickly decided, therefore, to consider as programmatic only those components that are assumed to affect groups of faculty and students beyond the individual writing class. For example, a staff decision to adopt a particular text or to establish particular goals for all courses in the program fits our definition of a program variable, whereas an individual instructor's decision about texts and goals unique to his or her course does not. (However, the administrative decision to allow instructors to make their own choices would in this case be programmatic.) Correspondingly, a campus decision to set up a writing laboratory or tutorial center is programmatic, whereas a particular instructor's decision to employ individualized procedures is not. (Again, an administrative decision to allow instructors such options would be programmatic.)

A definition that does not encompass any and all campus writing instruction must at the same time recognize that many elements of the campus as a whole have an impact upon the writing program. On some campuses, for instance, graduation writing proficiency requirements are an important feature of the larger context in which writing instruction takes place. On many campuses, the skill level of entering students will be a factor in program decisions. And on all campuses, administrative actions on one or more levels inescapably affect the writing program. Thus, the composition program itself, with its course structure and adjuncts, its content and methods, formed only one of four parts that we identified as interconnected factors that bear upon writing instruction.

The experience of the research team thus led us to formulate the following representation of the interplay of forces on campus that lead to a writing program. At the conclusion of the research, we came to realize that this formulation had been essential; even though our experiences in campus environments made us realize that these forces were at work, not until the data had been analyzed did we realize that our inquiry into the effects of what we finally called "the campus climate for writing" had led to significant findings.

Figure 4.1

Scheme for Major Categories of Program Taxonomy

```
                    Administrative Structure
                  /                          \
                 /                            \
                /                              \
Composition Faculty ------------------------ Composition Program
                \                              /
                 \                            /
                  \                          /
                   \------- Students -------/
```

Figure 1, with its lines of force indicating movement in both directions, shows the actual form and operation of a composition program as the result of a complex set of relations among faculty, administrators, and students. The program cannot be described as an abstraction apart from the individuals who give it life. Nonetheless, it has an identifiable structure of its own that derives from circumstances as well as cumulative decisions that are variously implemented by key individuals. Features of the program itself are influenced by and, in turn, influence other components of the taxonomy which, for research purposes, functions as a theoretical diagram. This framework makes it possible to describe and, eventually, to compare elements of the composition program, as earlier defined, within a complex campus environment.

Table 4.1

Summary of Major Factors in Program Taxonomy Categories

Administrative Structure and Decision-Making

- Administrative organization
- Faculty organization
- Department structure and decision-making
- Program decision-making and administration

Composition Program

- Structures
- Instructional formats
- Instructional activities

Composition Program Faculty

- Demographics
- Experience and education
- Motivation(s)
- Philosophy of composition
- Practices

Students

- Demographics (ethnicity, sex, age, etc.)
- Attitude and level of anxiety
- Academic record
- Pre- and post-measures

Administrative Structure and Decision-Making

The research team distinguished administrative issues from operational issues in order to determine how policies affecting the composition program are made. On all of the university campuses in our study (and on the vast majority of American college and university campuses) there are several levels of administrative organization. Closest to program operations is the administrative structure of the program itself, usually a small structure operating within the English department, and, in a few cases, within other units that have responsibility for writing instruction. The larger structure within which the composition program resides usually consists of departmental committees and a department chair. We expected that the quality of articulation between composition program and English department administrations would vary among campuses and would have an impact upon the operations or policies in writing instruction. Often, particularly on large campuses, this secondary layer of administrative structure may expand to include a school of humanities or arts and letters with its own dean and school committees.

Campus-level administration comprises the third and broadest level of organization and decision-making structures affecting composition. This may include campuswide committees, vice presidents, and deans, all of whom approve and allocate resources for implementing composition policies. Also, at this level, attitudes and decisions may affect the extent of campuswide involvement in and responsibility for composition.

A final layer of administrative decision-making is unique to multi-campus systems: the systemwide central office. It is at this level that the most important policy-setting decisions may occur and financial or legal support for those decisions arise. (This level has significantly affected composition instruction for the California State University, as Chapter 2 of this report makes clear.) Important policy, funding, and testing decisions made at the system level have had a strong impact upon all writing programs in the system. In particular, the Board of Trustees' action in May 1976 established three new policies that caused, and still cause, review and revision of campus writing programs: 1) a systemwide English Placement Test, 2) authorization of workload credit for faculty teaching remedial English, and 3) establishment of a writing proficiency requirement at the upper-division level as a condition for graduation.

Of all these structures, the administration of the composition program clearly has the most immediate impact upon writing instruction. Some composition chairs are highly trained in composition and exert considerable influence upon the program; others serve largely because it is their turn in a position someone must occupy. Some composition committees meet often and make important decisions on staffing, course goals, curriculum, texts, and examinations; other composition committees meet rarely and do little. The research team was particularly interested in knowing if such variations in the administration of the program relate to such matters as staff morale, faculty retraining, and the quality of student writing itself.

Table 4.2

Administrative Structure and Decision-Making

1. Systemwide administrative organization
    a. systemwide funding
    b. systemwide data gathering
    c. procedures and policies
        -- English Council of campus department administrators
        -- Academic Senate
        -- Placement and Equivalency tests (EPT, EEE)

2. Campuswide faculty entities and administrative policies
    a. campus committees and coordinators
        -- upper-division writing requirement committee
    b. campus policies, procedures, and requirements
        -- what are they at different levels: remedial, lower-division, upper-division?
        -- how are they decided?
        -- what is their impact on faculty?
    c. non-English department composition activities

3. English department structure and decision-making
    a. department chair
    b. committee structure and coordination
    c. composition direction and coordination
    d. faculty assignment
        -- student/teacher ratio
        -- teaching load
        -- proportion of staff teaching composition
        -- proportion of composition instructors/classes taught by non-tenured or non-tenure-track staff
    e. decision-making
        -- location of decisions by type (placement policy, texts, etc.)
    f. morale
        -- expectations for colleagues and program

4. Composition program decision-making and administration
    a. English department chair involvement in composition
    b. composition direction and coordination
        -- professionalism
        -- nature of responsibilities (texts, curricula, etc.)
        -- power/effectiveness
    c. composition committee
        -- meetings(frequency)
        -- power and jurisdiction
        -- nature of membership
    d. policy and procedure agreements for composition classes
        -- follow-up and enforcement of policy
    e. faculty development and retraining
    f. morale
        --expectations for colleagues and program

While this portion of the taxonomy does not attempt to list all possible administrative structures which may affect writing programs, it does encompass the functions that are likely to affect program quality.

Composition Program

Next, we focus attention on certain specific program components which represent options for the instructional process itself. These features often fall within the purview of a composition committee or composition chair; they may affect all or some portion of the five possible levels of composition instruction: pre-remedial (study skills), remedial, freshman, advanced, graduate. The research team considered three categories of features as probably significant: program structure itself, instructional formats, and instructional activities.

Program structure, where it can be said to exist, centers on features common to classes at a particular level (such as all remedial classes). Thus, some programs attempt to normalize grading procedures in various ways, ranging from exhortation to common examinations graded by the staff as a whole. While some programs rest content with implicit goals for instruction, others develop more or less elaborate statements of goals and procedures for all those teaching particular courses. Indeed, some programs by design avoid common standards, goals, and procedures, while other programs seek to develop them. We were interested to discover whether one pattern, or combination of patterns, tends to be associated with enhanced student outcomes. (Our findings in this area, given below in Chapter Nine, were not altogether what we expected to discover.)

While evaluation of composition instruction would appear to be an important common feature of composition programs, it varies considerably from one program to another. Graduate students and part-time instructors are routinely evaluated with considerable care, but full-time instructors may or may not be evaluated, and tenured professors rarely if ever are evaluated. It may be that the advantages of systematic evaluation are offset by the risk of lowering staff morale. The variety of evaluation practices in composition programs no doubt reflects this problem, as well as others.

A second category of features that the research team saw as potentially significant had to do with instructional format. The range here is from class lectures through small group activities to individualized instruction. In addition, support services for writing instruction vary widely in format. Learning skills centers, for instance, within or outside English departments, may offer tutoring, programmed materials, workshops, or even automated devices. The importance of these supplemental services had not been demonstrated, but the project team felt there was a strong likelihood that some of them would be associated with positive student outcomes.

Finally, instructional activities themselves are likely to be among the most significant program features. We wanted to know how much writing is assigned, how often, and for what purposes; we wanted to inquire about how assignments are given out and explained, and how much pre-writing and revision take

Table 4.3

Composition Program

Curricular Description of Courses by Type

(The following taxonomy is applicable to each of five types of composition course: 1) preremedial, 2) remedial, 3) freshman composition, 4) advanced composition, and 5) graduate level.)

1. Composition program structure
    a. commonalities among classes (within a category above)
        -- grading criteria
        -- common activities
        -- common goals
    b. teacher evaluation
        -- tenured and tenure track
        -- other

2. Instructional formats
    a. classroom format
        -- lecture
        -- discussion
        -- workshop
        -- small group
        -- individualized
        -- tutors
        -- student-teacher conferences
    b. other, supplemental or adjunct "services" (delivery formats)
        -- tutors
        -- learning or skills center
        -- computer-assisted instruction or other auto-tutorial methods
        -- counseling, testing

3. Instructional activities
    a. assignments
        -- assignment characteristics: length, frequency, mode, setting (home, school, lab), proportion completed in each setting
        -- assignment context: prewriting, revising, how assignments are given out and explained, planning opportunity and context
        -- syllabus
    b. response to writing
        -- marking papers: quantity and purpose of feedback
        -- feedback method: oral with class, oral with student, only written
        -- nature of feedback: priorities, emphases, tone
        -- relationship of feedback to instruction: audience, class work
        -- grading
    c. classroom instruction
        --content, methods, materials, and sequencing

place. We sought to discover and describe the content of classroom instruction, the methods and materials used, and the sequencing that shapes the curriculum. And, finally, we were interested in the teacher's response to writing: the quantity, nature, purpose, and method of feedback to the student writer, and the relationship of that feedback to the instruction in class.

Composition Program Faculty

With respect to the composition faculty, the research team identified several taxonomic categories, arranged under five principal headings: demographics, experience and education, motivation, philosophy of composition, and teaching practices.

Demographic categories include ethnicity, sex, and age. More or less strenuous efforts in recent years to recruit racial minorities as composition teachers are reflected in the ethnic makeup of composition staffs. The kinds of special programs developed for minority students sometimes depend upon a staff with similar background. It was, however, by no means clear whether separate classes or integrated ones are more to the benefit of most minority students, nor was there evidence to show that teachers are more effective if they share the same background with their students. Similar issues revolve around the numbers of men and women teaching composition. Age, as well, may have turned out to be significant; younger teachers may be more sympathetic to writing topics that engage young writers, while more experienced teachers may be wiser and more skilled in their teaching approaches and expectations. Because any one of these issues may have turned out to be very important for the composition program, a careful description of the composition faculty logically began with these demographics.

Table 4.4

Composition Program Faculty

(Including support personnel outside the classroom, as in the Learning Center or the Counseling Center)

1. Demographics
    a. general
        -- ethnicity
        -- sex
        -- age
    b. job related
        -- time on campus
        -- distance from campus
        -- status: tenured, tenure track, part- or full-time, lecturer, teaching assistant

2. Experience and education
    a. educational background
        -- training
        -- graduate school
        -- teacher assistant
        -- courses
        -- faculty development
        -- research, publications, grants
    b. related experience
        -- years on this campus
        -- total time teaching
        -- time teaching composition
        -- time at other campuses, with other student groups

3. Motivation
    a. professionalism
        -- main field of focus (English, rhetoric, linguistics, composition, etc.)
        -- attitude toward composition, toward teaching composition
        -- demonstrated interest: grants, conferences, publications in composition
        -- attitude toward students
    b. faculty development
        -- courses off campus (voluntary or required)
        -- in-service, campus retraining (voluntary or required)
    c. morale
        -- sense of autonomy
        -- sense of efficacy
        -- expectations for students (effect of students)

Table 4.4 (continued)

4. Philosophy of composition
    a. "why do you do what you do?"
        -- sequencing
        -- course grading
        -- etc.

5. Practices
    a. assignments
        -- assignment characteristics
        -- assignment context
        -- syllabus
    b. response to writing
        -- marking papers
        -- feedback method
        -- nature of feedback
        -- relationship to in-class instruction
    c. classroom instruction and format
        -- grading for course
        -- content
        -- methods
        -- materials
        -- sequence

Education and experience in the area of composition may be expected to be of considerable importance to faculty description. Traditionally, English faculty at the college level are trained in the study of literature or, to a lesser extent, linguistics or rhetoric. The training in writing offered in Ph.D. programs usually consists of some on-the-job supervision (sometimes quite desultory) while the candidate is teaching a section or two of composition during the writing of the dissertation. Until recently, the teaching of writing received neither attention, research, nor prestige in the education of most college English professors. For this reason, many English faculty who received their training more than ten years ago (that is, almost all senior professors) have had little or no formal education in the teaching of writing. We thought we might discover, however, that many senior faculty in the California State University closely follow the recent developments in composition and train themselves in the field, because they tend to become less specialized in the CSU than do their colleagues in more research-oriented institutions. Others, of course, may not have had either the interest or the time to keep up with a field that is peripheral to their training.

In recent years, newer Ph.D.s are more likely to have a systematic knowledge of composition as a field. Since most jobs in college English departments have consisted largely of composition teaching, and since there have been many applicants for each job, those with training in composition have found themselves better able to compete. Thus, in recent years, many of those receiving the English Ph.D. have had some education and experience in composition. Nonetheless, since it remains unusual to find a major Ph.D.--granting English department with a senior scholar in composition, and since academic fields change slowly, most of the scholars in composition are still self-taught. Thus, it is particularly useful to identify faculty with publications, grants, and ongoing research in the field, since at this time such evidence of professional activity indicates an unusual level of responsibility and energy. It may not be true, however, that scholarly activity translates into an improved writing instruction program. Conclusions in this area will only be possible after analysis of our data and data to follow--if, indeed, conclusions are possible at all.

While all campuses in our study (and the overwhelming majority of American campuses in general) require composition teaching, reward good teaching, and speak of honoring professional activity in the field, we knew there was a considerable variation in practice. Some composition programs appear to foster faculty composition activity much more than do others, or, perhaps faculty with active composition interests foster such programs. The programs in the study do give evidence of a wide range of faculty professional activity in composition, a range perhaps typical of American higher education in general.

There also seems to be a wide variation from campus to campus in the attitude composition faculty manifest towards each other, their students, and their work. This general area, which the research team called "morale," seems to be a result of many different factors, all of which are difficult to detect and to measure. Nonetheless, since such components of morale as the sense of teacher efficacy or expectations of student performance suggest program differences, it was decided to include "morale" as part of faculty motivation on the taxonomy.

Finally, faculty theories of composition and instructional practices are obviously central to description of composition programs. We expected to find faculty grouping themselves in several fairly clear-cut approaches to composition in theory and in practice. For example, there are those who feel strongly that reading instruction is integral to writing instruction, or that systematic revision is essential to teaching the writing process. It is interesting to compare individual faculty statements on such matters, actual classroom practices, and the views of program administrators. Since composition research, including this study, seeks to evaluate the comparative effectiveness of these various approaches for various groupings of students, it is critically important to discover what teachers are in fact doing (or, at least, what they assert they are doing) and why.

Composition Students

The academic background and demographic characteristics of the student body have an obvious and important impact upon the composition program. Despite the apparent similarity in admission standards, there are major differences in the student populations on the various campuses in the study. The various geographic settings of the CSU campuses not only reflect differences in kind of location (urban, rural, etc.) but differences in ethnicity as well. Such program features as Chicano studies or Black studies writing courses obviously depend upon adequate populations seeking to enroll in such classes. Again, campuses located in or near an inner-city will enroll more commuting students with lower socio-economic status (SES) than will rural campuses with a high proportion of students in residence; low SES is often associated with weak academic skills in general. More directly, the writing skill level of entering students on the English Placement Test (which is used to place freshmen in regular or remedial English courses) varies greatly from campus to campus.

These and other campus differences help give rise to composition program features that reflect the needs of the kinds of students on different campuses. Student characteristics, training, and ability levels need to be considered if a campus writing program is to be fully described.

Thus, a very small remedial writing component, or none at all, might reflect the absence of need on one campus, while it could be evidence of ignoring an important need on another.

Finally, as this research moved into its final stages, the consideration of student outcomes from the composition program became the most important of our sets of measures. Since we were seeking differences in outcomes for similar groupings of students, careful description of student characteristics were necessary so that the findings of the study could be meaningful.

Table 4.5

Composition Program Students

1. Demographics
    a. student descriptive questionnaires
    b. non-academic record before college
    c. academic record
        -- high school GPA
        -- SAT or ACT scores
        -- EPT scores
        -- college composition placement
2. Outcomes
    a. postsecondary academic record
        -- courses completed, GPA
        -- upper-division writing requirement
    b. research study instruments
        -- self-perception about writing, self-concept
        -- essay sample

Summary

The taxonomy presented here portrays the set of program features, in the college context, that the research team proposed as a guide for informed data gathering. It represents both an organized and descriptive frame for program features and an informed (though data-free) series of postulates about what might turn out to be associated with positive outcomes for students and faculty. The taxonomy was a basic theoretical construct that allowed the project to gather data. The research team was aware that some of the descriptive features were likely to emerge as far more significant than others, as the data from the campus programs began to fill in, or sometimes, alter the theoretical structure. Nonetheless, the taxonomy survived the test of the real world surprisingly well; the data collected from faculty and administrators generally confirmed the picture of program features portrayed. The taxonomy became the basic tool for organizing our research, and stands as a useful guide to program administrators, researchers, and teachers.

CHAPTER FIVE

DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING PROGRAM VARIABLES

Study Questions: The Phases Approach

In the first phase, our descriptive inquiry into the state of current practice (as represented by the California State University), we asked:

- What are the goals of composition instruction at the college level?
- What defines a composition program?
- What are the institutional structures within which composition programs operate?
- Who are the students these programs serve?

The answers to these questions were used to identify and define descriptive variables and to select outcome variables for the study of effective college composition programs. We described the development of the "Taxonomy" in the previous chapter and we will describe the descriptive methods and measures in this chapter.

The principle activity for Phase II was the development, collection, and scoring of the student outcome measures: the self-perception survey and the direct writing measure. We also asked the teachers of the classes included in the sample to comment on the relationship of the essay topic to their usual writing assignments, and therefore accumulated a set of faculty responses to the essay topic as well. We also developed factors from the faculty survey of Phase I to use as faculty outcome measures. Our study questions for Phase II thus had to do with data collection: Which kinds of data would provide us with valid and useful measures of the outcomes of composition program decisions? How could we arrange these evaluation data in ways that could provide us with a perspective on the single large question behind the research: Do composition program decisions matter and (if so) which are the best decisions for particular kinds of teaching situations?

During the third Phase of the research, the emphasis was on interpretation of the data in order to develop findings.

Descriptive Methods and Measures

We developed three instruments, in the order listed, to gather our descriptive data: (1) the campus Fact Sheet, (2) six interview protocols, and (3) the faculty questionnaire. These instruments are included in the Appendix, volume II of this report. (The reader is further directed to the Final Report of Phase I for more in-depth information on the descriptive measures of Phase I: ERIC documents, ED 239-292 and 239-293.) Before development of data collection instruments, our research team found it necessary to work out a preliminary framework of program features in order to develop meaningful ways to distinguish programs on comparable dimensions. The "Taxonomy of Writing Program Features" (see Chapter Four) resulted from these sessions and served as the cornerstone for the development of measures for gathering descriptive data. This taxonomy covers the four major areas of focus relevant to any investigation of college writing programs: the administrative context of the program, the program structure itself, the staff involved in the writing instruction and program administration, and, of course, the student population the program serves. Within each of these areas our research group defined categories and subcategories for descriptive information.

In planning for data collection it became evident we were interested in two sorts of data: individual perceptions and common fact. We knew we could gather factual information on department and campus policy and staffing rather easily with a brief "Fact Sheet" survey sent to English department chairs and their assistants. However, we did not want to leave personal perceptions about composition programs solely for the commentary of campus, department and program administrators, nor did we wish to depend only upon the comments of the writing instructors. Thus we settled upon a combined approach; we would interview administrators, and survey all writing faculty. The faculty survey would also allow us to acquire factual data on faculty demographics and educational background.

The Fact Sheet

The "Fact Sheet" was developed to gather such information as the number of sections offered in freshman composition; the kinds and sequence fo writing courses; the location of remedial assistance; the use of non-tenure-track staff and graduate assistants; and existing policies regarding texts, course content, instructional methods, and student evaluation.

We sent the Fact Sheet to the English department chairs on each of the nineteen campuses prior to any interviewing or interview script development. All nineteen Fact Sheets were returned.

The Administrator Interviews

The development of the interview protocols has been described in considerable detail in our Phase I report and readers seeking such detail should consult that report. Briefly, we developed and revised scripts for the interviewers, embodying the taxonomy categories of program features. At their broadest level these categories or domains of variables are (a) system-wide administrative structures and policies, (b) campus level structures and policies, (c) program level structures, policies and staff, and (d) students. For the most part, we concentrated our questions within the first three domains on organizational structures, inter-level communication and involvement, and decision-making processes for composition-related issues. Additionally, within the third category of program level variables, we included questions to elicit the attitudes and behaviors of leadership toward the composition staff; the differences between tenured/tenure-track and non-tenure-track staff in their skills and behaviors; and the perceived responsiveness of the composition program to the student population it serves. Also, since the Fact Sheets were available during the development of the interview scripts, they allowed us to identify particularly interesting variations in regular program operations that were used in wording questions and developing follow-up probes to those questions.

As we constructed our interview scripts, we realized that some categories of information were outside the range of experiences and responsibilities of certain administrators, while other questions could be asked of all interviewees. Accordingly we constructed six protocol forms, basically a single theme and five variations. These protocols are included in Appendix II.

The most detailed protocol is that for the composition program coordinator (sometimes called program director, head, or chair). In this script, we probe extensively for information on program policies and decision-making processes regarding instructional goals, methods, materials, and staff. Questions ask the program coordinator to describe hiring, training, and evaluation practices, and faculty retraining or in-service efforts. In addition, we ask about relationships between the writing program and the campus (for instance in the Upper Division Writing Requirement), and between the program and adjunct services (such as the Educational Opportunity Program).

A second interview, equally detailed, is that for the coordinator of remedial writing instruction. According to our Fact Sheet data, this position is not found on all campuses, and on those campuses where such a position exists, it is often an unofficial one. The remedial coordinator interview largely repeats questions asked of the composition coordinator, but focuses primarily upon the "program" of remedial coursework; there is also a greater emphasis upon describing the relationship between the department's remedial program and outside support services and special programs.

We also devised a script for coordinators of non-English department centers and programs offering (or claiming to offer) assistance in writing skills. We mainly focused upon the nature of that service and its clients, and coordination with English department offerings.

A fourth interview script was devised for English department chairs. It is much like the composition coordinator script; however, emphasis is upon the relationship between the composition program and the larger English literature department in which it resides. We include queries about the background of the chair with regard to writing instruction, and his/her perceptions of the kind and amount of support the department provides for the composition program. The chairs were also seen as the primary source for department perspectives on the "campus climate" surrounding writing instruction. (Recall that the CSU campuses must now "certify" the writing competency of upper-division students before granting bachelor degrees.)

The fifth and sixth interview protocols are for campus administrators who are in a position to exert an influence on the composition program. The research team's collective experience as faculty and our impressions from the Fact Sheet data suggested that the academic vice presidents and deans of the schools within which the English departments are housed are often involved in writing program policy and would be good sources of information about campus climate for writing instruction. Most of the questions in these two scripts ask about interest in and commitment to college level composition instruction, and perceived impact on the campus from the system-wide upper division writing requirement for graduation.

After development, pilot-testing, and revision of the scripts, and after interview training, the five English professors on the research team carried out 57 face-to-face interviews on ten of the nineteen campuses in the CSU system. Interviews took place during early winter of 1981; audiotapes were transcribed, notes integrated and compiled by late winter.

The Interview Sample. We did not have the funds to visit all nineteen of the CSU campuses, which are scattered throughout the length and breadth of California, requiring extensive travel. We therefore decided to sample ten campuses which we selected to include variations in locale, size, and character.

The nineteen CSU campuses are diverse with regard to geographic location, enrollment size, and ethnic makeup of the student body. Tables 5.1 - 5.2 describe the nineteen campuses on each of these three dimensions, based upon data gathered and maintained by the Division of Analytic Studies of the systemwide Chancellor's Office. Also of interest in our study, campuses differ in their use of part-time and full-time, non-tenure -track instructors to teach undergraduate composition courses. Table 5.3 presents this information.

The research team settled upon the descriptors of urban, suburban, and suburban-fringe/rural to describe the larger community surroundings for our campuses. The definition of enrollment size is a relative one, and the creation of subcategories of large, medium, and small have been made at natural break points in the distribution of enrollments. Categories representing proportion of minority students are defined relative to the proportion of minority student

Table 5.1[1]

Geographic Setting of the Nineteen Campuses of the California State University

Location in the State	Community Setting Rural	 Urban	 Suburban
North	B M R	D E	H N
Central	A C S		P
South	G	F K L	I J O Q

Table 5.2[1]

Student Population: Enrollment Size and Ethnic Mix on the Nineteen Campuses of the California State University

Ethnic Diversity	Undergraduate Enrollment Small (< 10,000)	 Medium (10,000 - 20,000)	 Large (> 20,000)
High Minority (< 62% White)	G Q		E L
Relatively Mixed (62 - 80% mixed)	S	F I N	D H J K
Low Minority (> 80% White)	A B M	C R	F O

[1] Data for both tables are based upon 1980 enrollments, compiled by the Division of Analytical Studies, CSU Chancellor's Office.

Table 5.32

Use of Part-Time and Tenured English Department Staff on the Nineteen Campuses of the California State University

A. Part-Time versus Tenured as Percent of FTEF*

Percent Part-Timers	Percent Tenured Less than 75%	 75% or More
Less than 10%	S	A B D N O
10 to 19%	C G R	I H K P Q
20% or More	E M	J L

*FTEF data unavailable for one campus.

B. Non-Tenure-Track Faculty as Percent of Headcount

Less than 20%	A B N O S
20 to 39%	C D G H I J K P Q
40% or More	E F L M R

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[2] Data for both tables are based upon 1980 figures available from the Division of Analytic Research, CSU Chancellor's Office.

populations on each campus. Enrollment figures for Black, Hispanic, and Asian students vary between 7% and 40% of total undergraduate populations. Accordingly, our three categories representing campus ethnic makeup are defined in terms of percent of white students: low white being less than 62% white undergraduates, relatively well-mixed running 62 to 80% white enrollment, and high white at 81% or more.

Staffing status within English departments is a complex variable, consisting of several factors. These factors describe the distribution of official status and responsibility. Full-time staff may be tenured or tenure-track, or contract lecturers. Part-time staff are lecturers, contracted as needed, course by course. Generally, graduate teaching assistants are not counted in these categories.

These data, along with campus location, were used in conjunction with Fact Sheet data to select ten campuses to interview that would be representative of the variations in campus characteristics described above. Additionally, we sought campuses with reputations for innovation or particular success in their composition program. We reached agreement on the following campuses, designated by the same code letters used to identify them on each of the data tables: A, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, and Q. As it turns out, this sample includes the two polytechnic campuses in the CSU system.

Analysis of Interview Data. Interview analysis began after we received the transcriptions of taped interviews. We divided the transcripts into numbered sections using an arbitrary but constant size rule based upon turn-taking in the interview dialogue. To digest the interview data and transform them into more manageable units, we followed a recursive process in which we both applied categories to the information and allowed categories to emerge from the data. The larger categories of the Taxonomy of Writing Program Features provided the initial set of general coding categories, though this was modified during several training session in interview coding.

We asked each of the five research team members, all of whom had done interviewing, to code each numbered passage according to the main conversational topics. Each interview was coded by two raters; no one coded an interview he or she had conducted. Then, within each topic area, the passages were re-examined to decide upon categories within topic distinguishing a range in the responses of the different interviewees.

Interviewee identification, passage numbers and their codes were entered into a computer data-base. Frequency counts of code numbers indicated for which topics we had the most, and most diverse, information. In this way we indentified eight topics for first priority analysis. These topics were further reduced in number to five, by considering the results of the factor analysis of questionnaire data, described below. We settled upon the following five issues, each of which addresses an element of the Phase I research questions and each of which corresponds to a questionnaire-based factor.

- Composition program goals and instructional philosophies
- Composition program coordinator's activities and responsibilities

- Procedures and resources in remedial instruction
- Procedures and policies for the upper-division writing requirement
- Nature of writing instruction available outside the English department

Our next step was to read through the coded sections of interviews for each topic. This time readers did not rate or code passages further. Instead, they let the remarks of the interviewees suggest aspects of the topic area that should be noted. After all note-taking activity had been completed for one topic area, readers met and discussed their notes and impresssions. First, readers agreed upon a descriptor for the topic area and then, aided by their notes and quotations from the transcipts, the group worked out categories distinguishing among campuses (or uniting them). Following agreement on the topical analysis of interviews, we wrote up prose drafts explicating those categories and descriptors, offering quotations in support of analysis conclusions. These "vignettes" were circulated among the analysis group for comment and modification.

We decided to indicate in which category each campus program had been placed for each descriptor. However, by doing so we do not mean to imply that these analyses are based upon and yield facts. They do not. They are perceptions and personal beliefs of administrators, and our analysis yields their impressions of how the world works on their campus. The intention of our analyses is to identify program patterns, not to evaluate or compare individual campuses.

In fact, as we began to discriminate groupings of programs we found that two of the ten campuses in the interview sample have fully developed writing programs in operation outside the English department. In these two instances, writing program directors coordinate the courses and instructors much the way their English department colleagues do. Thus, we feel it is important to include the two outside programs in our descriptions, with their own identifying code, since they are legitimate programs. But where other departments simply offer a functionally equivalent course, even one accepted in lieu of an English department course, they have not been considered as complete and separate "programs" of writing instruction.

The Faculty Questionnaire

The faculty questionnaire proceeded from the identification of domains of information needed for the research. Decisions on specific content were guided by our discussions following interview experiences, by Fact Sheet data, and by the relationships among program variables hypothesized by our taxonomy. We decided to cover four domains of information: (1) skills and knowledge about the teaching of composition, (2) attitudes toward composition as a subject and toward the composition program on campus, (3) self-reported behaviors that demonstrate an instructional approach and professional interest in composition instruction on campus, and (4) perceptions of the group process in decision-making for the program, sharing of ideas, perceptions of efficacy, and of outside support for writing instruction.

We deliberately included items similar to those questions which had appeared on the various interview protocols. In this way we hoped to verify our interview data and to expand upon it by tapping a source unavailable to administrators, that is, classroom activities as reported in confidence by actual instructors. In particular, our interview data had already demonstrated to us a remarkable consistent lack of awareness on the part of progam and department administrators of what goes on in the composition classrooms (and minds) of the full-time, tenure-track faculty. This gap in administrator information is largely due to the almost absolute autonomy these faculty members enjoy in comparison to the more carefully supervised and evaluated part-time or non-tenure-track lecturers who teach composition.

We constructed the questionnaire in a way that allowed us to avoid relying upon responses to any one or even two items to draw conclusions about faculty attitudes, beliefs, and practices. Instead we devised item sets, each covering a different dimension or facet of a single subject area, and we allowed for a wide range of choices along each dimension. Our survey is not a checklist; respondents did not simply give yes-or-no answers about whether they "do, have, or use" something. In every item we required our respondents to answer by assessing "degree" (of use, importance, or influence, for example).

The main source of information about faculty attitudes and beliefs is the set of 31 "Likert" items (items which ask for degree of agreement with a given statement) covering a range of topics such as attitudes towards composition instruction, department colleagues teaching composition, students in composition and remedial courses, program and department leadership, and campus policies affecting the writing program.

A second source of information about faculty perspectives is a set of 23 items requiring the faculty respondents to evaluate various influences on the composition program. For each of these influences, such as the department composition committee, the student population, and the available adjunct instructional services on campus, respondents assessed the kind (from positive to negative) and degree (from high to low) of impact these influences had upon composition instruction.

Most of the items on our questionnaire asked respondents to reflect on their instructional practices in teaching remedial writing, first-term freshman composition, or some other lower division writing course. After indicating course referent, all respondents answered the same set of items on their classroom instructional practices and goals. These items were arranged in six sets of questions asking instructors about what they do in class: (1) themes underlying the organization and sequence of writing class instruction, (2) materials used in writing class instruction, (3) classroom teaching arrangements in writing classes, (4) kind and number of writing assignments required of writing class students, (5) frequency of various kinds of response to student writing, and (6) proportion of in-class time spent in each of a variety of activities. In each set of items we asked faculty to rate the importance or the frequency of various options.

We used answers to these and other items to develop two different factor analyses, a statistical procedure which examines patterns of responses to find a common set of items in those patterns. Where a common item grouping is found, the items are said to form a "factor," a hypothetical trait which underlies and "accounts for" the apparent clustering of those items. A factor (to which the researchers then affix a descriptive name) can then be used to generate a "score" which summarizes the particular pattern of answers given by any one respondent. This "score" describes the respondent in terms of the factor, for example, "high" or "low" on an attitude factor. Several of these factor analyses are given below in Chapter Eight.

The Questionnaire Sample. From department chairs we obtained rosters of all those full- and part-time staff members who currently or regularly taught freshman or remedial writing courses. In early spring 1982, questionnaires and prepaid, pre-addressed return envelopes were sent to individuals listed on those rosters. Though we assured respondents the questionnaire responses would not be linked with individuals and though we did not ask for identifying information on the questionnaire form, we did employ a discrete coding system that allowed us to track names of those individuals who had or had not yet returned our questionnaire. We followed up on those individuals whose questionnaires we had not yet received with a second mailing of the questionnaire packet. In addition, several English department chairs sent out memos to the faculty (we offered chairs a guide letter to adapt) stressing the importance of the research and of their participation. Our return rate for the questionnaire is 56% for a total of 418 respondents.

The sample of instructors who returned their questionnaire includes representative portions of tenured, tenure-track, and part-time faculty. These individuals (N = 418) show a reasonable diversity of age groups, despite the general shortage of jobs over the last decade. The largest grouping (33.7% or 137 respondents) is 40-49 years old; 29% are in their thirties, while 21.4% are in their fifties. Fewer than 10% are in their sixties; 6% or so are in their twenties.

About 60% of our sample report completion of the Ph.D., and only 8.3% have less than an M.A. Most of the respondents (70%) report American or English literature as their major field of study. The remaining responses are distributed among linguistics, composition, education, and rhetoric (in descending order of popularity). A surprisingly high 14.7% report "other" categories, such as history, sociology, and counseling, a finding that suggests some influence from those urging writing across the disciplines and involvement of non-English faculty in the teaching of composition.

Over half of our instructor-respondents (58.5%) report themselves as tenured or tenure-track, while 35.7% are part- or full-time contract lecturers. Graduate student assistants (5.4%) and administrators (0.5%) complete the sample. As one might expect, rather more composition teaching is done by the younger staff than by the old-timers. For "years teaching writing," faculty responses range from one to forty years (with a mean of 13.3 years), but over two-thirds of the group reports teaching writing sixteen or fewer years. The actual distribution of responses suggests a bimodal sample, with one group of respondents clustered around three or fewer years (generally non-tenure-track instructors) and a second group, the "tenured/tenure-track" faculty clustered around twelve to fifteen years of experience in the teaching of writing.

Thus, it seems clear that our questionnaire data is unusually useful for this kind of research. The very high rate of return, the wide representation of the faculty teaching composition, and the inclusion of all campuses in the CSU all give us a particularly rich source of information in which we can place considerable confidence--as long as we remain alert to the fact that the questionnaire data do not necessarily represent reality but stated perceptions of their activities and attitudes by the faculty.

The Baseline Student Performance Measure: the EPT

The English Placement Test (EPT) was designed by a faculty committee in 1976-77 as a means of providing information to the CSU campuses about the writing ability of entering freshmen, most particularly those at the lower end of the ability range. Working with consultants from the Educational Testing Service, the committee (on which three faculty from our research team served) developed a four-part test which has since proved to distinguish effectively between students prepared for freshman composition instruction and those who need additional instruction before freshman composition. We were able to obtain EPT scores for most students in our sample and we felt confident that we could use EPT scores as a baseline measure for student writing ability at the point of entrance into CSU writing instruction programs.

The EPT consists of four parts, three of them in multiple-choice format: Reading, Sentence Construction, Logic and Organization, Essay. Each of the sections is described in part as follows in a descriptive publication for teachers and students (California State University English Tests, Office of the CSU Chancellor, second edition, Fall, 1982):

> 1. **Reading.** The reading section is 35 minutes long and consists of a series of multiple-choice questions based on short passages given on the test. Students are asked to identify the main idea in a passage or to interpret ideas stated directly and indirectly. Other questions test understanding of figurative language and the ability to determine the meaning of a word from the context in which the word appears.
>
> 2. **Sentence Construction.** This section of the test is 35 minutes long and consist of multiple-choice questions dealing with the way parts of a sentence must be arranged in order to make the meaning clear. This portion also examines the student's ability to adhere to the requirements of standard written English and to observe the conventions of good writing. There are two types of questions in this section of the EPT. One type asks the student the best way to phrase an idea so that the phrasing fits both the sentence it is in and the conventions of standard written English. The second type presents a sentence and asks the student to think about rewriting it

according to given directions. The student must, in the process, select phrasing that preserves the style and the logic of the sentence as rewritten. Both types of questions cover such issues as sentence sense, coordination and subordination, tense sequence, pronoun antecedents, and predication.

3. **Logic and Organization.** The third multiple-choice portion of the test is also 35 minutes long. It focuses upon the ways in which ideas are related and the ways in which ideas can be arranged in logical sequence. Questions ask students to indicate how two sentences are related to each other, to choose beginning sentences and concluding sentences for paragraphs, to identify specific examples, to distinguish fact from opinion, and to select the word or expression that indicates the proper logical connection between two ideas in a sentence. The questions in this section test these matters without requiring the student to know particular terminology or formal logic.

4. **Essay.** The essay requires 45 minutes of writing on an assigned topic. That time should be sufficient for students to read the topic carefully and to organize thoughts before writing; it also simulates the conditions most often presented to students as they write in-class papers or examinations in college. The topic invites the student to draw upon personal experience and observation for information, examples and generalizations. While the essay is scored "holistically" by several faculty members (that is, with a single score for over-all quality),

the readers agree on a scoring guide that helps define quality. Such matters as sentence and paragraph structure, mechanical correctness, and clear and precise language have an important influence upon that score. Students must write on the topic assigned, handle all sections of the topic, and support generalizations by specific examples.

The usefulness of the EPT as a baseline measure of student writing ability is beyond dispute. As a systemwide test required of most entering freshmen (those scoring at the eightieth percentile or above on the SAT Verbal or ACT English Expression tests are exempt), it provides a consistent measure of performance across all campuses for our student sample at the point of college entrance. With its combination of multiple-choice and essay scores, it provides a relatively reliable total score, and valuable sub-scores. It also provides a conceptual framework for the key skills (at least for testing) for beginning college writing students.

Nonetheless, it would be quite wrong to call the EPT a "pre-test" in relation to our outcome measures. It does not intend to measure those skills that are taught in freshman composition; it instead focuses upon the most telling criteria for decisions about placement in remedial or developmental course work. Thus its focus upon sentence-level skills, personal experience writing, and reading comprehension of short and simple passages all argue against it being considered as a pre-test of freshman composition skills.

As we considered the most appropriate ways to use the EPT as a baseline measure, with full attention to the ways in which it cannot serve as a pre-test of what is generally taught in freshman composition, we needed to develop a conceptual and developmental relationship between the EPT and our writing outcome measure. We also needed to find ways to expand the scales of measurement, since the EPT is not designed to make distinctions among higher ability students. The following chapter shows how we developed the writing performance outcome measure to take advantage of the EPT as baseline, yet with a full awareness of the additional tasks that needed to be accomplished.

Overview of Dependent Variables

The principal activity for Phase II was the development, collection, and scoring of the student outcome measures: the attitude survey and the direct writing measure. We also asked the teachers of the classes included in the sample to comment on the relationship of the essay topic to their usual writing assignments, and therefore accumulated a set of faculty responses to the essay topic as well. We further developed faculty attitude data from the faculty questionnaire distributed and collected in Phase I. We thus are able to use five separate dependent variables: three different student essay scores and attitude measures for students as well as faculty. The following chapter details the development, data collection procedure, sampling, and scoring of the writing performance outcome measure; Chapter Seven will give descriptive information about the student self-perception measure; Chapter Eight will set out the data analysis of these variables.

CHAPTER SIX

THE WRITING PERFORMANCE OUTCOME MEASURE

The proposal for this research did not anticipate conducting a direct writing assessment, for two reasons: the time, expense, and effort required to conduct such an assessment would be (and turned out to be) very great; the literature gave few examples of useful data derived from direct measures--and some discouraging examples of such efforts leading nowhere. After prolonged discussion of this issue with the faculty research panel and the outside advisory panel (which recommended strongly and unanimously that we include such a measure), we decided to proceed to administer an essay test to students as a direct writing outcome measure. In the light of the useful results this effort provided, this decision turned out to have been wise.

The basic reason that our research obtained results from the direct writing measure, we believe, is that we were particularly careful to avoid the many pitfalls in essay testing that often lead to unreliable or invalid results. In addition, we developed two new approaches to essay scoring, which we added to the more conventional holistic approach, in order to derive three separate scores for each essay. This chapter details the careful procedures we followed, a series of steps we believe embodies the best current practice and also breaks new ground in the use of direct writing assessment for research.

Question Development

Initial discussion of the kind of writing assignment to be used for the outcome measure led to a series of conclusions: (1) a single, 45-minute writing sample was all that our funding and our classroom writing instructors would permit; (2) the writing assignment would need to examine the skills taught in freshman composition, and hence would need to be different in design from the English Placement Test (EPT) essay described in the previous chapter; and (3) methods would need to be found to gather considerable information about each student essay, since mere ranking (the product of holistic scoring) often fails to measure small gains. These decisions led to the development of guidelines for selecting the essay topic.

Essay Question Guidelines

Description. We decided that the topic should include a demand for descriptive writing, so the student can demonstrate the ability to use concrete language in clear sentences. The topic should allow the student considerable range of choice so that the student can choose a familiar and accessible object for description, and so that even very weak writers will be able to perform in a measurable way.

Abstraction. We agreed the topic should ask the student to move from description into some form of abstraction, so that the student will be able to demonstrate the ability to move between the abstract and the concrete and to relate concrete description to concepts. The topic should allow room for inventiveness, even as it makes this demand, so that students who have been trained to work at various levels of abstraction will be able to demonstrate that skill.

Analysis. We decided it was important to require students to compare, evaluate, or otherwise analyze the material they have described and developed. Though this increases the difficulty of the writing assignment, we felt a demanding question would help us to make distinctions among the better writers, for whom freshman composition is frequently a course in systematic thinking.

Standard Prose Forms. Finally, after much discussion, we included the expectation that the student writing be expressed with enough regard for the conventions of educated usage so that meanings are communicated clearly and unambiguously, without those distractions that are unacceptable even in first-draft writing.

The inclusion of the "analysis" requirement precluded the use of any of the EPT essay questions from the well-stocked question pool. However, the research team members all agreed that freshman composition emphasized analytic writing skills. We looked next at questions brought in by team members from their campus question pool for the upper-division writing competency requirement (certification of upper division writing skill has been mandated as an exit requirement for graduation at the CSU, though each campus may devise its own certification method).

Several essay questions were presented by members of the research team, and two were extensively pre-tested. The unanimous judgement of the team was that one question clearly elicited better writing and a better range of writing skill. The question was revised several times before achieving its final form:

> **Some changes or inventions intended as "improvements" turn out to have unforeseen or unfortunate consequences. Think about and select one such change in, for instance, a product, machine, procedure, policy, or institution. In an organized essay, briefly describe the situation before the change, explain the intended "improvement," and discuss the gains and losses resulting from the change.**

We took the revised question back to the field for a final pre-test which we would score. Because we were very concerned with the ability of "low end" students to respond to our question, we conducted our final pilot test with freshman composition sections from San Bernardino Valley Community College. We also asked the students to evaluate the question after they finished writing to it, and project staff met with one of the sections to discuss the question (as well as the student self-perception measure described below in Chapter Seven) in order to discover possible ambiguities or avoidable problems. The student response was positive.

Our research team scored these pre-test essays using the holistic scoring guide devised by the same campus group that had composed the original essay question. We wanted to get a sense of the range of writing skill produced by the question and its sensitivity to the criteria we had established. We found that the question elicited measurable writing from virtually all students, whatever their ability, and we found a wide range of scores. It also seemed that writing skill measured by the question for the pilot-test classes correlated with responses to attitude questions; that is, classes with more positive perceptions of their writing ability showed noticeably higher average holistic scores.

Table 6.1

Specifications Describing the Essay Question

1. Cognitive processes
    - a. Perception of the paradox and/or irony in the topic
    - b. Conception of a procedure for writing
2. Heuristic skills
    - a. Perception of the problems to be solved in the topic
    - b. Ability to follow directions through stages of the topic
3. Invention processes
    - a. Selection of an appropriate subject within the topic
        - .A particular "invention" (not a generalization)
        - .A sufficiently complex and interesting subject
        - .An invention with advantages and disadvantages
        - .An invention reflecting a real change
    - b. Selection of an appropriate controlling idea
        - .Establishment of focus
        - .Maintenance of focus
4. Development skills
    - a. Selection, organization, and presentation of some relevant details that support the controlling idea of the paper
    - b. Demonstration of control over levels of generality
        - .Abilitytomove betweenmore abstract andmore particular levels of argument
        - .Ability to use rhetorical markers to guide the reader through levels of generality
        - .Ability to maintain cohesion through use of markers
    - c. Control over organization and paragraphing
    - d. Demonstration of ability to use
        - .edited American English
        - .vocabulary appropriate to subject and purpose
        - .syntactic structures and patterns appropriate to the complexity of the task,e.g.,subordination, transitions,coordination,devices forcohesion which accurately convey abstract relationships

Before final adoption of the question, the research team met to more carefully describe assumptions about freshman end-of-term writing skill and the skills and knowledge required by the essay question we had selected. We wanted to be as certain as possible that our question would tap skills that were not only teachable, but also commonly taught in freshman composition. We relied upon the general descriptions of freshman composition we received from our "Fact Sheet" survey forms, and found four broad categories of instruction: cognitive processes, heuristic skills, invention processes, and development skills. We expanded these points into a set of specifications describing the content measured by our essay question (See Table 6.1).

Collection and Sampling of Student Essays

The Collection of Student Essays

Throughout the 1982 calendar year, students in freshman composition courses on all nineteen CSU campuses participated in our study. Because of a three month delay in receipt of continuation funds from the NIE, we were obliged to gather data from two different academic years (one calendar year), beginning with the Winter Quarter and Spring Semester of 1982 (middle and end of the 1981-1982 academic year), and ending with Fall Quarter and Fall Semester, 1982 (beginning of the 1982-1983 academic year). At the beginning of the new academic year, we again sent department chairs our "Fact Sheet" to update our information on the freshman composition programs. No English department indicated that significant changes had taken place in courses, materials, placement, staffing, or student characteristics.

Obviously, we wanted to test students at the end of their composition course in order to capture the effects of instruction. However, there are several reasons why it was neither possible nor desirable to use our essay measure as a final exam. In the first place, we did not feel our measure tested all that may be covered in freshman composition (numbers of such courses teach, for example, the research paper); our test would not be a suitable final exam for all course instructors' grading purposes. In the second place, we knew we could not secure full cooperation from faculty to do so. We decided that a good time for our testing would be two weeks before the final exam (or last class). In this way, instructors could still use the week before the class exam for review or preparation for their particular test. The research project test time slot was specified well in advance of the test date, and English department chairs or composition coordinators were strongly encouraged to discuss the study and testing procedure in a meeting with the freshman composition instructors. Members of the research team offered to attend faculty meetings to speak about the project.

Composition coordinators and English department chairs were paid an honorarium to assist us with the distribution and collecton of the student essay booklets. Labeled packets of booklets were sent to the chair or coordinator who then handed them out to the freshman composition instructors. In addition to the student essay booklets, each packet contained a teachers' manual of instructions for completing the essay booklet questionnaire and for setting up the essay task. The manual also required teachers to note time of day and any unusual activities that might have compromised the validity of the testing situation. The last two pages of the manual provided space for the instructors to comment on the match between their course instruction and the given essay topic. Most teachers made good use of the opportunity to respond; while almost all saw the question as related to their course goals, the comments revealed a great deal about the instructors and their courses which we expectto analyze at a later time.

Our attention to the needs and sensitivities of the faculty we depended upon to gather data was well rewarded. We not only obtained more than 25,000 essays written (in most cases) according to the conditions we specified, but considerable positive feedback and interest in the project from these faculty.

Selection of Essays for the Scoring Sample

Though we gathered essays and questionnaire data from as many freshman composition course sections as possible, we were not able to score all essays. This was never our intent. We planned to draw a stratified sample of classrooms, roughly ten, from each of the nineteen campuses. But, since we knew that there are always problems in gathering classroom data from a wide variety of instructors, we over-sampled in the expectation that we would be likely to lose some data. The sampling proceeded through several steps. First, we found it necessary to eliminate classes from two of the nineteen campuses from the pool. In one case, a very large campus had test booklets from only two instructors; in the second case, about half the classes were drawn from the wrong course (a second term "composition" course, not the mandatory first term freshman composition class).

We wanted to get intact class sections from those instructors who had completed our Phase I faculty questionnaire. Of course, we know that our tenured and tenure-track instructors do not often teach the mandatory lower division composition courses, and that temporary instructors present in one school term may be gone by the next term. Nevertheless, we used our questionnaire roster to select our first stratum of composition classes. Where there was more than one class section for an instructor, we combined the classes. In a few rare instances, where we had more than ten matched classes on a given campus, we randomly selected instructor names. More often we found that our matched classes did not add up to ten different instructors. In those cases we randomly selected other instructors' sections to complete the sample. Our final subsample contained 3420 usable student essay booklets.

Information contained on the cover sheet of the student booklets was entered into our student database; then the booklet was covered for scoring, hiding all identifying information except student number and providing essay readers with a score sheet.

The Holistic Scale: Rationale and Procedures

Advantages and Problems of Holistic Measurement

Holistic scoring of student writing has been developed in recent years as an efficient and relatively reliable method of ranking student papers according to stated criteria. Because of its reliability and efficiency, holistic scoring has been widely used in various testing programs over the last two decades. However, despite its clear value, certain problems occur when holistic scoring is used for research purposes.

In the first place, a ranking, while valuable, is a rather slim bit of data to result from the large effort and cost of gathering and scoring a writing sample; one would like to have more information from the sample than a mere ranking. For example, the rather narrow differences in student outcomes which this research is designed to consider may not show up as changes in relative rankings of students on overall writing performance. Secondly, since, by definition, holistic scoring offers a single score for the overall quality of the writing, this method of scoring cannot be considered a reliable measure of sub-skills; we had to consider the possibility that measurable improvements in student writing that result from program differences might show up not as overall changes but as sub-skill variation. In addition, since holistic scoring ranks in order of quality the papers being scored (that is, since such scoring is in part norm referenced), the relation of holistic ranking of a given set of papers to a set of criteria must be drawn with considerable caution; the top papers of a set may be the best without meeting ideal criteria, and the worst of one set could be (in strict norm referencing) the best (or near the best) of another. In practice, holistic scoring does seek to relate the ranking process to stated criteria, as we do below, but the criteria must be met by the actual range of papers being scored so the full range of scores can be used. That is, holistic scoring uses criteria in the scoring, but cannot be considered a true criterion-referenced scoring system since the criteria emerge in part from the student papers, not entirely the other way around.

Despite these problems, it was both necessary and desirable to conduct a holistic scoring of the essays. The ranking that results gives a standard score on a familiar scale, and remains the most reliable method of scoring writing now in common use. The holistic scoring of our trial test results by the research team did show measurable mean differences from class to class, and we could not overlook the possibility that the differences we were looking for would in fact show up as differences in ranking on overall quality. We also knew that, even if the results we were seeking did not emerge from the holistic scoring, that scoring would become a reference for the additional discourse feature scorings that later took place. The important principle for writing research using writing samples is that the holistic scoring should not be used by itself as the sole measure. While additional measures can yield new data, and more refined data, holistic scores provide essential information.

Thus, the holistic scoring guide (see below and Appendix II) was intended to yield a ranking of the student papers in the sample, from the best to the worst, according to the criteria stated, judging the writing as a whole on overall quality.

Development of the Holistic Scoring Guide

Unlike the Feature scales, the holistic scale did not call for major innovations on our part. Not only is the procedure and theory of such a scale well established but a functional scoring guide for an early version of our question already existed. Thus, we reviewed and revised this scoring guide, testing it upon batches of papers not included in the student sample, until we were convinced that it efficiently and unambiguously described the overall writing qualities of the various levels of papers to be scored. The readers and table leaders in fact found the scale most workable (although many felt it to be too elaborate and complicated for maximum efficiency) and the remarkably low discrepancy rate (interreader correlation of .75) testifies to the clarity of the scoring guide.

HOLISTIC SCORING GUIDE

6

A paper in this category will complete all the tasks set by the assignment. It will be distinguished by lucid and orderly thinking -- and may even introduce an original interpretation of the writing topic. It will be virtually free from errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure. And there will be evidence of superior control of language.

5

A paper in this category may slight, but not ignore, one of the tasks of the assignment or deal with it only by implication, but the writer will demonstrate a clear understanding of the writing topic. It may not be as thoughtful or as carefully reasoned as a 6 paper, but it will not be characterized by mere statement and restatement of ideas at a high level of generality. Although the paper may have minor weaknesses in paragraphing, it will contain evidence of the writer's ability to organize information into unified and coherent units. It will be largely free from serious errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure. And it will be generally well written, characterized by clarity if not by felicity of expression.

4

Although a paper in this category may execute the assignment less completely or less systematically than a 6 or 5 paper does, the paper will come to terms with the basic tasks of the assignment. The reasoning may be less precise and less discriminating than one would expect to find in a 6 or 5 paper, but it will not be flawed by logical fallacies. It may insufficiently develop a point or two, but it will give evidence of the writer's ability to support key ideas. It will be organized and paragraphed well enough to allow the reader to move with relative ease through the discourse, though there may be some disjointedness and lack of focus. It may contain errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure, but not so frequently as to call into question the writer's command of the conventions of the standard dialect or to consistently distract the reader from the content. The paper will display generally accurate use of language.

3

A paper will fall into this category if it shows serious difficulty managing the tasks of the assignment; OR if it shows definite weaknesses in analytic thinking; OR if the paper is so markedly underdeveloped that key ideas stand virtually without illustration; OR if errors in sentence structure, usage, and mechanics seriously interefere with readability. There may be distinctive weaknesses in paragraphing and organization, but the total effect will not be chaotic. The writer's control of language may be uncertain.

2

A paper in this category may fail to come to terms with the assignment; that is, tasks may be ignored, misconstrued, or badly mishandled; or redefined to accommodate what the writer wants to say or is able to say. There is also likely to be a combination of the following defects: serious errors in reasoning; little or no development of ideas; and no clear progression from one part to the next. There may be serious and frequent errors in sentence structure, usage, and mechanics, giving the impression of distinctly inferior writing.

1

This category is reserved for the paper in which a combination of errors, conceptual confusion, and disorganization create the impression of ineptitude. There are, however, definite indications of the writer's attempt to deal with the topic.

0

This paper is obviously "off-topic" by intention, whatever its writing quality. (NOTE: These papers will be retained in the sample for D&F and C&E scoring.)

Scoring Procedures

The holistic scoring session was held at the Kellogg-West Conference Center, on the campus of California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, in late February, 1984. Readers were selected from the pool of CSU English faculty who regularly read essays for system-wide tests such as the English Placement Test. Readers were selected on the basis of data indicating their reliability and reading pace in previous scoring sessions. Because we wished to reduce travel costs as much as possible, we restricted our invitations to faculty from the ten southern California campuses. The reading took two-and-a-half days, over a three-day weekend.

During the reading, readers were grouped into four tables of six readers. Each table was under the direction of a seventh person, the table leader, whose job it was to monitor the readers and to maintain consistent standards at the table. Reader training occupied half of the first day of the reading. The research team had earlier developed the detailed scoring guide given above and selected a series of sample papers to illustrate the score points on the guide. After a brief discussion of the holistic scale and the essay question, readers received a packet of six of these sample papers to score according to the scoring guide. After assigning scores to the sample papers, readers were led through a discussion of the scores the papers were selected to illustrate and why. This training procedure was repeated several times. At each successive sampling, the readers improved their accuracy and developed a trained consensus about the particular characteristics or criteria that distinguished essays according to the holistic scale categories. When the readers were judging sample papers with a high rate of consistency, the essay reading began.

Throughout the reading, readers were monitored by their table leaders, whose job it was to check over the papers scored at the table, talk to any reader whose scoring seemed "off target," and respond to any questions or requests for clarification by the readers. In addition to this monitoring system, readers were checked at each of several whole-group scoring sessions, similar in procedure to the initial reader training session. As the reading progressed, occasional common problems or issues surfaced; papers presenting these problems were selected for inclusion in new sample packets, and thus, in the whole group discussion which followed.

Discrepancy Scores. While agreement among the raters is the goal of any scoring, it is necessary to define "agreement" before deciding upon a procedure to resolve disagreement. We decided to add the two scores given (on a six-point scale) by the two independent readings and thus create a twelve-point scale for total scores. This procedure allows for odd-numbered scores on the scale, and therefore defines a one-point difference in score (the only way to obtain an odd-numbered score) as a legitimate total value, and hence "agreement." That is, a paper scored, say 4 by one reader and 3 by another for a total of 7, is defined by this procedure (and is indeed likely to be) of lower quality than one receiving two 4s and of higher quality than one receiving two 3s.

While a one-point difference is both allowable and appropriate according to this scale, differences greater than one must be defined as "disagreement" and hence as unallowable discrepancies to be resolved. We followed the customary procedures for the reconciliation of discrepant scores. Where two readers' scores differed by more than one point, the readers' names and scores were noted, both original scores were covered up again, and the booklet was given to a Table Leader or the Chief Reader to read. The discrepancy reader would then assign a final score, thus resolving the discrepancy. In most cases, the third (discrepancy) score agreed with one of the two original scores (4, 2, 4) or fell directly between them (4, 2, 3). In the first case, where the discrepancy reader agreed with one of the other readers, we discarded the discrepant score to arrive at a total (4, 2, 4 = 8). In the second case, where the discrepancy reading fell between the two original scores, we doubled the discrepancy reader's score (4, 2, 3, = 6). In exceptional cases, we decided to allow the discrepancy reader to give two scores as well as one. That is, if the paper were judged to be a legitimate borderline paper, hovering between a 3 and a 4 paper, we allowed the discrepancy reader to give it both scores for a 7 total score rather than be bound to give only the one score that would declare the paper an 8 or a 6. (This is not typical for discrepancy resolution in holistic scoring. However, we feel it is more valid, since it uses the full range of the scale and recognizes that any one category of the scale, for example, a 4, includes "high 4" and "low 4" papers.) The recording of reader names and the direction of their discrepant scores allowed us to monitor individuals in the reading, and to help table leaders advise their readers.

The results of the holistic scoring appear at the end of this chapter. As we expected, our trained readers were able to score the sample of papers with speed and accuracy. The score distribution gave us data we could use with some confidence as a measure of overall writing ability, defined by the skills usually expected at the end of a freshman composition college course. When we later developed the score distributions for the Feature scales described immediately below, we found (with some relief) that there were important differences among the three writing measures, despite considerable overlap. Those differences and similarities are discussed following the descriptions of the Feature scales. In each case, the great care we took with reading procedures led to a small number of discrepancies to be resolved and to a very high rate of consistency among the readers--which, in turn, offered us usable data for the study.

The Feature Scales: Rationale and Development

The idea for a second scoring of essays first arose at the joint meeting of the research team and the outside advisory panel. Members of the advisory group supported the research team's discomfort with the power of the single holistic score to capture differences among programs of instruction. The outside advisory panel agreed that this was a difficulty associated with essay scoring generally. In the discussion that followed, it was suggested that a second reading, focusing upon a single specific quality, might turn up more discriminating scores. At that time, we were mainly considering a mechanics or other "countable" quality for the second measure.

In subsequent meetings, the research team grappled with the idea of a second reading, recognizing the limitations of holistic scoring for our research design. We realized the need for a measurement procedure which would 1) show a conceptual and developmental relationship to the EPT, the baseline measure for the writing ability of entering students; 2) include both low-level and high-level measures, so as to expand the probability of meaningful score differences at both ends of the scale; and yet, 3) yield different information about student writing than did the holistic scoring. We ended up with two measures, which we wound up calling "Feature scales": the first, focusing upon the student's ability to develop and control concepts, we called "Development and Focus (D&F)"; the second, focusing upon the student's ability to convey thought in efficient and acceptable prose, we called "Correctness and Efficiency (C&E)." The D&F scale (which we, mistakenly, thought would be the more demanding of the two scales) helped us understand and evaluate each writer's conceptual skills with special emphasis on his or her ability to explore ideas and their relationship to one another. The C&E scale put more stress on product than process as it focused on syntactic efficiency and degree of control over the written English dialect. Both scales describe sets of skills students should have mastered at the end of one term of freshman composition.

Chapter Six: The Writing Measure

Development of the Discourse Block for Scoring

We faced two large obstacles in our planning for a second scoring: independence of scales and cost of scoring. We were concerned that readers accustomed to holistic scoring might find themselves doing holistic scoring despite any specially focused scale we might present. We decided to isolate a part of each student paper for the scoring, as a sure way to solve this problem, while also saving on time (and cost) of the new reading. By not allowing readers to read the entire paper, we thought we might prevent readers from being influenced by the same qualities theyrely upon (consciously or not) to select a holisticscore.

This idea opened up other possibilities for uncovering the effects of instruction. In particular, we recognized that less skilled writers might be competent paragraph writers but not yet skilled at integrated multi-paragraph writing. If we used our second scoring to look at paragraph level skill we might be able to differentiate among students at the "lower end" of the holisticscale.

After several intense meetings, the research team agreed upon a modified paragraph scoring. Writing samples drawn from the unsampled pool of freshman papers revealed that many students did not use paragraph markers in conventional ways during the test situation under which they wrote. Often, the conceptual unit that might have made up a paragraph was spread between two paragraphs, or one marked paragraph actually included more than one paragraph-level idea. Thus it became evident that we could not rely upon students' markings of paragraphs in their first-draft work, and we soon began to refer to "discourse blocks" rather than paragraphs in our discussions of student essays.

In discussions led by Dr. David Rankin, a specialist in rhetorical theory and a member of the research team, we therefore substituted for the conventional concept of paragraphs the notion of "discourse blocks" ("DBs") bound together by an assertion or statement (sometimes called a "contract sentence") requiring illustration and development, and its dependent argument. We deliberately avoided the terms "topic sentence" (which is associated with paragraphing) and "thesis sentence" (which is associated with essay organization).

After much work and practice, we agreed that marking discourse blocks for scoring within each essay might be the best way to accomplish our goals in the second scoring. Scoring only the marked block would help readers accustomed to holistic scoring to focus upon the specific writing features being measured (since they would be unable to read and score the whole essay), and therefore would avoid confounding the Feature scores with the holistic score. In addition, we had the slim hope that by reading less text we might reduce costs by saving reader scoring time.

Thus, before the second scoring took place, discourse blocks had to be identified and marked in each of the 3420 student essays. This was accomplished by students from Professor David Rankin's graduate course in Stylistics, under close supervision by Dr. Rankin. We decided to use D&F concepts for block marking, since we assumed that any sequential block would serve for the C&E scoring. The graduate students' first task was to identify the "contract sentences" in the student prose, that is, those sentences which formed (or might form) the center of a developed idea. Such sentences make assertions at a high enough level of abstraction to require subdivision, example, definition, supporting argument, and similar devices of development. Those marking the blocks searched for the richest such assertion, wherever it was to be found in the essay, and delimited the discussion that supported it, without regard to the paragraph markers used by the student. If no such block were to be found in the essay, the first page of writing was marked arbitrarily as a block for scoring purposes on the C&E scale, and the paper was scored "9" on D&F. (Most such papers were--despite the demands of the expository question--personal narratives whose chronological development offered only a sequence of events with no discernible concepts.) For a few very short or very limited papers, the only possible block turned out to be the entire essay (only 128 of roughly 3420 papers). While in some cases the blocks became the entire essay, in general they consisted of a series of connected sentences intended to develop a single assertion, a unit which was able to be marked clearly for reading and scoring. These sentences may or may not have been associated with the paragraph markings students used in their (first draft) essays, and they tended to form blocks of connected discourse averaging a bit over 100 words.

During the scoring sessions using the Feature scales, we recognized that there might be problems with the blocks that had been selected. And, in fact, it soon became evident that there were going to be occasional papers in which the marked block was not the best block. We decided to allow the first reader of a paper to propose alternate block marking to the chief reader at that time. However, after a first score had been given, no block changes could occur. We also allowed readers to read outside the block, but only in order to clarify pronoun referents or other elements of meaning in the block. While a few readers found it frustrating to be prohibited from reading (and responding to) the whole student essay, almost all of the raters were able to score the blocks consistently and quickly. The different score distributions from the three scales show that different criteria were in fact used; we are, of course, unable to say how much of those differences are traceable to the block marking procedure, since the different scoring guides in themselves sought to achieve different measures. There is no question, however, of the economy of the procedure. The additional cost of the block marking (which required a full day of a class of graduate students) was slight compared to the savings gained by the rapid scoring achieved by the highly trained readers during the scoring session.

The Correctness and Efficiency Scale

Rationale. Since a major goal of freshman composition instruction is to teach students how to write correctly and efficiently, this Feature scale sought to develop a consistent measure of this skill for our student sample. The Correctness and Efficiency Scale (C&E) measures students' syntactic efficiency and their control of sentence elements. It is conceptually related to the EPT sub-test in sentence construction, and was intended to give the most meaningful information about students at the low end of the holistic scale. (It in fact turned out to be a more advanced measure than D&F, and hence to give the most meaningful information at the high end.) It is not a simple mechanics measure, but one which looks for sentence and word choice quality, in a very large sense.

This scale takes very seriously the kind of writing problem that makes the reader reread or mentally rewrite the prose in order to make out the writer's meaning. We asked our readers to define as "efficient" that writing which makes little or no demands upon their puzzle-solving skills. Thus, students with low scores on this measure are those who have problems with predication, sentence structure, and denotative or syntactical ambiguity; high scores reflect competent and syntactically efficient sentences.

The main problem arising from attempts to focus on these elements of writing is that, as always, the least significant faults in writing tend to be immediately apparent and are often given too much weight. For this reason, we asked readers to overlook the kind of trivial fault that anyone is likely to make in first-draft writing, such as an occasional spelling error, an omitted word, even an accidental agreement error, as long as the discourse block as a unit suggested that the writer would very likely have corrected the mistake given enough time for revision.

For each score level, the scoring guide describes traits required at both the sentence level and the word level. At the upper ranges of the scale, the issues tended to be of style and rhetorical sophistication; at the lower ranges, the readers needed to decide upon the seriousness of interference with communication.

Development of the Correctness and Efficiency Scale. The research team began work on the C&E scale by agreeing on what we were measuring. We needed to keep clearly in mind that this scale focuses, as one of our documents put it, on "measuring the writer's success in using the words, sentence structures, and graphic conventions that may be reasonably expected of first draft writing to convey clear meaning to the reader." While the skills measured by the D&F scale represent a social facility in communication that is normally naturally acquired, the C&E scale calls for formal written ability that seems to require learning and is in large part culture-based. In other words, Correctness reflects a writer's awareness of his/her audience and an ability to achieve politeness through socially accepted forms of discourse.

Since the C&E scale developed into an innovative essay measurement device, we went into considerable detail in describing what we did and did not include. We wrote that "correctness in writing means freedom from non-trivial errors in grammar, punctuation, diction, and other features which hamper the reader's access to tha meaning" and that "efficiency in writing means freedom from confusion, inexactness, and clumsiness of expression; the writing conveys the writer's meaning to the reader without demanding mental revision or guesswork." Very early in our deliberations on this scale, we divided this area into (1) sentence-level and (2) word-level errors. This distinction was of considerable help in developing a conceptual framework for the scale and then in writing the scale itself.

We defined sentence-level errors as follows: faulty predication, pronoun reference, parallelism, and modification (e.g., dangling constructions), as well as all kinds of confused, awkward, and inexact phrasing and faults such as redundance, awkward repetition, and wordiness. Illogical or missing transitions within sentences or missed opportunities for subordination were also considered sentence-level errors, as were punctuation errors that interfere with meaning.

Word-level errors were defined to include faulty inflectional forms, mangled or incomplete words, and all kinds of mistaken, unidiomatic, or imprecise word choices. Mistakes in mechanics (apostrophe, hyphen, or capital letter) were also considered errors if repeated or if they interfered with meaning. Spelling errors, which may occur in even the best papers, were not considered serious faults unless they were so frequent as to seriously distract the reader.

We coupled correctness with efficiency because correctness without efficiency is usually vapid, primer prose. In addition, we determined that correctness alone suggests a basic understanding of the written code, while the addition of efficiency manifests itself in a fluency and a stylistic flair that should be rewarded by scores at the top of the C&E scale. So, this Feature scale reflects essentially incorrectness at the bottom range of the scale, correctness with little or no efficiency in the middle of the scale, and the union of correctness and efficiency at the top of the scale.

The development of the C&E scoring guide took many months. As the document went through revision after revision, it became more theoretically consistent and more functional for readers to use. Dr. Kim Flachmann, a research team member and specialist in remedial writing, has prepared a detailed account of the various drafts for the use of others who may wish to observe our process before undertaking a similar one for themselves; she will make available the six drafts the C&E scale passed through to those writing her at the English department of the Bakersfield campus of the CSU. We here include only a brief summary of the process, with an early draft and the final draft of the scale.

One of the early drafts follows. It reflects the rationale for the scale, the use of discourse blocks for scoring, the conceptualization of word-level and sentence-level categories, and the anticipated use of a six-point scale with its basic division into "top half" scores (6, 5, 4) and "bottom half" scores (3, 2, 1). It also shows our attempt to differentiate this scale from the holistic one and the D&F Feature scale.

Correctness and Efficiency in Writing (Early Draft Scale)

TOP HALF

Sentence Level
- Clear syntax (subject-verb agreement, parallelism, modifiers, predication)
- Embeddings where appropriate
- Use of pronouns with clear referents
- Clauses and phrases are clear,gracefully placed, exactly worded
- Punctuation supports meaning
- Economy of expression (without redundancy or verbosity)
- Complete sentences

Word Level
- Proper and consistent noun and verb forms
- Few careless errors in spelling, incomplete words
- Careful and exact word choice
- College level vocabulary
- Correct use of prepositions
- Correct use of American idioms

Overall

The discourse block shows a relatively clear translation of thought into discourse; the surface structure reflects a deep structure of thought without interference from sentence and word level problems.

BOTTOM HALF

Sentence Level

More than 1/3 of the passage shows problems with clarity of syntax; inaccurate, misplaced, or mismanaged embeddings; pronouns without clear referents; or punctuation errors. The block seems vague, uneconomic in expression, or wordy, or in general inefficient in translating thought to language.

Word Level

More than a few word problems, such as oral interference, misused or mangled words, inflection or conjugation errors, misused prepositions, bad spelling.

Several drafts further along, the following description was inserted in a much more detailed scoring guide to distinguish between the upper and lower halves of the scale:

> Discourse blocks rated as 4, 5, or 6 convey the writer's ideas clearly and directly, and demonstrate control or even mastery of the forms and conventions of written discourse. DB's rated as 3's give evidence of less consistent control of written expression, primarily due to some interference from conventions of oral expression or non-standard dialect. DB's rated 2 or 1 are characterized by the lack of evidence of any knowledge about written as opposed to oral expression.

At this point we took a closer look at "correctness" and "efficiency" per se, arranging the issues of concern in the following charts:

CORRECTNESS AND EFFICIENCY (Sentence Level Features)

	6	5	4	3	2	1
subject-verb agr.	correct	usually correct	might be flawed	might be flawed	usually flawed	seriously flawed
parallelism	correct	usually correct	might be flawed	might be flawed	usually flawed	seriously flawed
modification	correct	occas'ly inefficient	might be flawed	might be flawed	usually flawed	seriously flawed
predication	correct efficient	occas'ly inefficient	might be flawed	might be flawed	usually flawed	seriously flawed
wordiness	economical	economical	might be wordy	might be wordy	usually wordy	wordy redundant
fragments	deliberate	deliberate	accidental	accidental	accidental	accidental
run-ons	none	none	accidental	accidental	accidental	accidental
embeddings	logical, effective	occas'ly ineffic'nt	occas'ly ineffic'nt	usually ineffic'nt	always ineffic'nt	usually none
pronoun reference	clear	clear	might be unclear	might be unclear	usually unclear	usually unclear
transitions	logical	logical	might be illogical	might be illogical	usually illogical	usually illogical
punctuation	exact	exact	might be inexact	might be inexact	might be inexact	might be inexact

CORRECTNESS AND EFFICIENCY (Word Level Features)

	6	5	4	3	2	1
vocabulary	college-level	college-level	not consistent college level	not consistent college level	limited	very limited
diction	exact	less exact	occasionally inexact	occasionally inexact	often incorrect	often incorrect, confused
noun, verb, adjective, adverb forms	correct and consistent	correct and consistent	occas'ly incorrect and inconsistent	occas'ly incorrect and inconsistent	often incorrect and inconsistent	usually incorrect and inconsistent
American idioms	correct	correct	occas'ly incorrect	occas'ly incorrect	often incorrect	usually incorrect
spelling	few errors	few errors	some errors	some errors	many errors	many errors

As we studied the interaction of these two features, we began to realize that concepts relating to efficiency, characterized by precision, clear diction, and conciseness, generally dominated scores at the top half of the scale, while concepts relating to correctness or socially acceptable (handbook) prose, dominated the lower-half of the scale. Even more scrutiny revealed that we awarded a 4 and above to papers of students whose mastery of correctness and efficiency we could tolerate (and even praise), while we gave a 3 and below to papers of students whose correctness and efficiency abilities we could not comfortably tolerate. We also took time to define our terms in detail at this point, making sure we agreed on the causes of inefficiency, which we believe rotates around a lack of experience and confidence, and of incorrectness, which we believe stems from a lack of knowledge or learning.

We reassured ourselves that all criteria on our scale were to be applied to first-draft writing; then we collectively wrote a draft of the scale that after a bit more intensive editing, reworking, and refining became our last draft.

CORRECTNESS AND EFFICIENCY RATING SCALE

Upper-Half Scores

6

Sentence Level. Sentences at this level are characterized by

1. Clear and logical predication (s-v-o);
2. Sufficient, accurate, and appropriately placed modification;
3. Rhetorically effective structure (with appropriate parallelism, subordination, variety); and some stylistic refinement (such as effective emphasis and rhythm);
4. Generally effective and correct use of punctuation and mechanics.

Word Level. A Discourse Block (DB) at this level uses words that
1. Convey exact meanings;
2. Show control of connotation and metaphor;
3. Do not violate conventions of written discourse (reflected in the writer's use of word forms, idioms, and spelling).

THE MAJOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FIVE AND THE SIX PAPER IS IN RELATIVE SOPHISTICATION OF STYLE.

5

Sentence Level. Sentences at this level are characterized by
1. Clear and logical predication;
2. Sufficient, accurate, and appropriately placed modification;
3. Generally effective structure, but, in contrast with the six paper, with less variety, less sophistication of design, and some awkwardness of phrasing;
4. Generally effective and correct use of punctuation and mechanics.

Word Level. A DB at this level uses words that
1. Convey generally clear meanings;
2. Show control of connotation and avoid mixed or inappropriate metaphor;
3. Seldom violate conventions of written discourse (for example, word forms, idioms, and spelling).

THE MAJOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FIVE AND THE FOUR PAPER IS IN RHETORICAL SOPHISTICATION. WHILE BOTH ARE CORRECT AND RELATIVELY EFFICIENT, THE FOUR PAPER TENDS TOWARDS SIMPLICITY AND FLATNESS.

4

Sentence Level. Sentences at this level are characterized by
1. Some imprecise predication;
2. Occasional problems with modification;
3. Some subordination though little rhetorical sophistication;
4. Generally effective and correct use of punctuation and mechanics.

Word Level. A DB at this level uses words that
1. Are occasionally imprecise or over-general;
2. Occasionally convey unintended implications or contain mixed or inappropriate metaphors;
3. Are sometimes written in incorrect forms.

LOWER-HALF PAPERS ARE LIKELY TO EXHIBIT INTERFERENCE FROM ORAL, ESL, OR NON-STANDARD DIALECT. THE LEVELS OF EFFICIENCY AND CORRECTNESS ARE LOW ENOUGH TO CAUSE THE READER TO PAUSE TO WORK OUT MEANINGS.

3

Sentence Level. Some sentences at this level are characterized by
1. Unclear predication;
2. Scarce, imprecise, or awkward modification;
3. Noticeable rhetorical problems insubordination, coordination, parallelism, pronoun reference, etc.;
4. Punctuation and mechanical problems that do not seriously interfere with meaning, but draw attention to themselves.

Word Level. A DB at this level occasionally uses words that
1. Approximate intended meaning;
2. Show insensitivity to connotation and metaphor;
3. Violate the conventions of written discourse (for example, word forms, idioms, and spelling).

THE MAJOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE THREE AND THE TWO PAPER IS IN THE FREQUENCY OF THE PROBLEMS THAT OCCUR AND IN THE DEGREE TO WHICH THESE PROBLEMS INTERFERE WITH COMMUNICATION OF MEANING.

2

Sentence Level. Sentences at this level are characterized by
1. Predication that is confused or incomplete to the point that mental revision is needed to understand meaning;
2. Missing, dangling, or misplaced modification;
3. Rhetorical inefficiency caused by problems in subordination, coordination, parallelism, pronoun reference, etc.;
4. Punctuation and mechanical problems that interfere with meaning.

Word Level. A DB at this level uses words that
1. Convey inappropriate meanings;
2. Show insensitivity to connotation, metaphor, etc.;
3. Seriously and frequently violate the conventions of written discourse (for example, word forms, idioms, and spelling).

THE MAJOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO AND THE ONE PAPER HAS TO DO WITH THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SERIOUS INTERFERENCE WITH COMMUNICATION (TWO) AND APPARENT LACK OF AWARENESS OF THE WRITTEN DIALECT (ONE).

1

This discourse block is so flawed by errors and inefficiency on the sentence and word level that communication is seriously retarded. The writer lacks a grasp of the sentence structure, vocabulary, and conventions of written English.

Notice the summaries of the differences after every score. These served as guideposts for all of us who used this new scale and probably accounted in part for the fairly high interreader correlation of .67 on a new scale of this sort. In essence, the information in capitals on the scale focuses the reader's attention and the scale items themselves describe the writer's performance at various stages.

The Development and Focus Scale

The Development and Focus Scale (D&F) measures the writer's skill in the identification and development of an idea and his or her audience sensitivity in doing so. It is conceptually related to the EPT subtest in Logic and Organization, and was designed to measure such skills without regard to the correctness or efficiency of their expression. As with the C&E scale, readers did not read the entire student essay but scored the marked discourse block.

The D&F scale is derived from theories of rhetoric developed by Francis Christensen, collected as Notes Toward a New Rhetoric, (New York: Harper and Row, 1967). Christensen's influential concepts of sentence and paragraph construction were not designed for measurement purposes, but we found them to be extremely useful for the development of our D&F scale. In particular, we adapted his concept of movement among levels of abstraction as a key measure for development of an assertion; his observation that skilled writers move to more particular levels in order to discuss general statements allowed us to devise a scoring scheme for development in our marked discourse blocks.

In addition to Christensen's fertile theory of levels of development, we considered current research in cohesion and in rhetorical marking. The D&F scale also measures the degree to which the discourse block holds together and the degree to which the writer guides the reader through the developed idea by using those terms indicative of the movement of thought.

Students receiving low scores are those whose writing does not go beyond the first level of generality and is not clearly marked; high scoring students are those able to carry out well-marked development with focused support or elaboration and sensitivity to a reader's need to see connections.

D&F Scoring Theory and Procedure. The Development and Focus scoring procedure was designed to determine whether students could perform the cognitive operations that produce in discourse a subordinate pattern of development, and to determine whether they could maintain coherence in the pattern by means of various focusing devices. The scoring guide further rewarded students who were able to enrich the basic pattern of ideas by additional internal development at the sentence level. We chose not to award high scores to students who did not develop their controlling idea beyond two levels, not because a coordinate pattern is *never* the best or right way to develop a particular idea but because our prompt was intended to stimulate the kind of analytic thinking that involves refinement and exemplification beyond a mere listing of parallel (and thus coordinate) statements of support for a general proposition.

This method of measuring development in discourse is based ultimately in the notion, as stated by the linguist Edward Sapir, that "language is heuristic." Or, to put it more simply, one thing leads to another. Whether trained to do so or not, the mind recognizes both the possibilities (for itself) and the need (for an audience) for development (clarification, exemplification, support, etc.) of a fairly general idea that it has formulated. The more explicitly aware the mind is of this possibility and need (possibly as a result of instruction), the more likely that it will consciously loop back into what it has been saying and understand what needs to be done to develop a point.

Different kinds of propositions require different kinds of development. The writer, consciously or not, must know whether a proposition needs only simple illustration (that is, raises the question, What does this mean?) or requires support (that is, raises the question, How do we know that this is valid?). The better writers and thinkers in our test population made this distinction, chose an appropriate pattern and kind of development, and employed focusing devices that contributed to the *rhetoric* of the discourse, not merely to its coherence, defined as structural linkage. It is this connection of Focus as an organizing rhetorical principle to the usual meaning of Development that supplies the theory for our combined scale.

Without what we are calling Focus, there simply is no discourse. All connections, emphases, qualifications, etc., would have to be supplied by the reader. Indeed, it is difficult to speak of Development in isolation from Focus, since many of the focusing devices, especially in the more sophisticated papers, are not only markers of thought direction (for the reader) but also are integral to the thought pattern itself. For example, a writer aware that a statement just made might be vulnerable to challenge, may acturally think "however" before formulating the qualifying statement, may even use the concept "however" as a means of discovering a suitable qualification.

A really effective pattern of development in prose is representative of a mind in dialogue with itself, making predications, examining those predications, identifying key terms, responding to the implications--and then working out those implications at increasingly lower levels of generality until, within a given unit of discourse, equilibrium has been reached. This equilibrium is maintained only briefly, of course, since the completed unit (at the sentence level or beyond) creates in the mind looping back into it new pressure for additional development.

Our scoring concept and procedure were thus based upon current theories of cognition and discourse, and their intersection. Cognition occurs as the mind seeks to express it in language. Of course, in first draft writing the mind may be able only to raise and develop issues to a certain point, allowing then a new period of incubation to take place between drafts, which leads to further development of ideas when the discourse is reexamined. Some of the writers in our test population obviously connected better than others did with the topic and hit upon subject matter that they had already thought about or that proved fertile once they got into it. There is no way to control for this variable in a spontaneous exercise. Students who might have written better developed and focused essays on another topic were, in this sense, "penalized" by the topic. On the other hand, we might contend, as we do in our criteria for the question, that we were testing the ability to think of a subject rich in possibilities for development. What is remarkable, in any case, is that so many writers did produce, in first draft, essays of considerable sophistication, intellectually and rhetorically.

The scoring results contain some surprises, but not many. Maybe we cannot, or should not, conclude that the relatively higher scores on Development and Focus (as opposed to the other scales) reflect the results of instruction solely, since people do "learn" to develop ideas, even if only in a fairly primitive way, in social discourse, as they respond to questions and challenges from their listeners. But formal instruction does reinforce and make conscious the cognitive operations that underlie what we are calling Development and Focus, and it certainly is required for the most systematic kinds of thinking.

Development of the D&F Scoring Guide. The development of the D&F scoring guide followed the same lines as we have described for the C&E scale. Many successive drafts were required, over a period of many months, as the research team tested the draft guides on student papers drawn from outside the scoring sample. Despite this substantial investment of time and labor, a few ambiguities were discovered and corrected during the training period at the essay reading; revision thus continued until just minutes before the scoring began.

Readers had substantial difficulty internalizing the distinction the scale allows between the movement of thought and the surface structure of the language. It was possible, for example, for a non-native speaker of English to achieve the highest score in D&F despite severe spelling or verb tense problems. The chief reader and table leaders had to be alert to the tendency of readers to include matters reserved for C&E in their scoring criteria, despite much discussion and overt agreement on the scoring guide. The reading moved less rapidly than we expected and repeated training exercises were necessary to keep the readers on scale.

This labor was repaid with substantial agreement among the readers (interreader correlation of .66). As the analysis of data below indicates, the D&F scale did in fact produce the different information about the essays it was designed to elicit.

DEVELOPMENT AND FOCUS SCORING GUIDE

Upper Half Scores

6

1. There will be movement to at least a third level of development.
2. There will beat least (a) one shift back and forth between levels of development, or (b) movement to four or more levels of development.
3. A distinctrichness will be achieved within levels of development, either within sentences, by various means of modification (embedding, free modifiers, initialized adverbials), or in successive sentences that represent coordinate amplifications of an idea already expressed

on a higher level of generality.

```
e.g.,    1              1
           2              2
             3              3
           2                  4
             3
```

4. Use of focusing devices will indicate awareness of the need to keep the audience oriented. Functional markers are present and used correctly.

THE MAJOR DISTINCTION BETWEEN 6 & 5 IS QUALITY OF DEVELOPMENT (richness).

5

1. There will be movement to at least a third level of development.
2. There may be shifting between levels or movement to four or more levels of development.
3. There will be some richness within levels.
4. Use of focusing devices will indicate awareness of the need to keep the audience oriented.

THE MAJOR DISTINCTION BETWEEN 5 & 4 IS FOCUS (quality of markers).

4

1. There will be movement to at least a third level of development.
2. There may or may not be shifting between levels.
3. There will be little or no richness within levels.
4. These papers will be less focused than 5 papers.

THE MAJOR DISTINCTION BETWEEN 4 & 3 IS DEVELOPMENT (3 levels, under control).

Lower Half Scores

3

1. There will be movement to a second level of

development. If there is apparent movement to a third level or beyond, the reader will be distracted by irrelevant details or ideas. Generalizations, abstractions, or important ideas may remain undefined or not illustrated even if the prose seems to move to a third level.

2. There will be little or no richness within levels.

3. Some focusing problems may cause the reader to work a bit to stay on track.

THE MAJOR DISTINCTION BETWEEN 3 & 2 IS FOCUS ("3" papers still have a grasp on focus).

2

1. Therewill be movement to a second level of development or to an ersatz third level.
2. There will be little or no richness within levels.
3. There will be a distinct lack of focus, with the result that the reader must supply the connections in the prose, if, indeed the writing is in any sense consecutive discourse.

THE MAJOR DISTINCTION BETWEEN 2 & 1 IS DEVELOPMENT.

1

1. There will be no movement beyond one level of generality. The prose will consist of undeveloped generalizations or meaningless specifics that support no clear-cut controlling idea.
2. There will be no richness.
3. There will be a distinct lack of focus.

NOTES

OFF TOPIC blocks have been eliminated and should not be an issue. Lower half blocks are characterized by their focus, in a mostly narrative mode, on personal experiences. Low level specifics are never gathered into a larger meaning, or their meaning is self-evident. Though the reader may have to infer generalizations, this will not affect essay score. However, it is not acceptable for the reader to have to infer the support (e.g., details) for generalizations.

The Feature Scales Scoring Session

Because we were using newly developed scales and a new approach to scoring (discourse blocks, not whole essays),it was necessary to meet with our table leaders well in advance of the scoring session for discussion and practice with the new scales and the issues they raised.

The selection of readers was equally deliberate. Many of those who had participated in the holistic scoring were invited back; at the close of the holistic scoring we had explained our planned second reading and asked readers if they would be available and interested in scoring with the Feature scales. We asked readers to indicated their preference in scales, and wherever possible, we placed readers according to those preferences. However, because we needed to generate twice as many grades, two for each of the Feature scales, additional readers were required (even though the scoring of blocks allowed the readers to work more rapidly). The research team took particular care in inviting readers who would be cooperative, quick learners of a new scoring system.

Based upon our own experiences scoring essays with the scales, we expected the C&E scale to allow for faster block reading than the D&F scale. For that reason we provided two tables of six readers each for the C&E scale and three tables of six readers each for the D&F scale. We used two separate rooms for the reading, one room for D&F and one for C&E. Each essay booklet was read by two readers in one room before moving on to the second room for scoring. All scores were covered before the paper was given to another reader.

As with the holistic scoring session, readers spent the first half of the first day training to use the Feature scale to which they had been assigned as a reader. Readers met as one group at first for an explanation of the discourse blocking and the reasoning behind the use of the two Feature scales. We also expected that readers would be more likely to disregard writing features outside their scale (spelling, for instance, in D&F) if they knew that such matters were being scored elsewhere. Readers then retired to their separate rooms for scale-specific training with packets of practice papers.

The Correctness and Efficiency Reading. The Correctness and Efficiency reading was coordinated in much the same way as a holistic reading with two scores for every student essay and three scores for discrepant papers. We had two tables of six readers each and a chief reader in our room; both tables in this room were led by members of the grant's faculty panel and the chief reader was the grant director, Edward White.

For training and norming the readers at significant intervals throughout the two-day reading, we pulled various samples from the "live" student papers. The first batch of sample papers we gave the readers was scored 6 through 1. Reminding the readers again and again that we were scoring first-draft writing from the end of one term of freshman composition, we began our discussions using 6 and 1 papers as anchors. As we applied the rest of the scale to the samples, the readers noticed rather quickly that sentence- and word-level weaknesses or strengths in a given paper complemented one another. As the readers became more adept and faster at applying this scoring guide to the papers, we were called upon to remind people throughout the session that although we might be used to figuring out our students' meanings in a set of class papers and giving them the benefit of any doubt we might have, such practice during this scoring would not help us see the finest distinctions possible among student papers. To make the C&E reading as accurate and reliable as possible, we had to read what the students wrote the way they wrote it.

We all discovered, as we suspected, that the first day of the reading involved isolating in our minds Correctness and Efficiency features. This meant getting the traditional holistic scoring guidelines out of our systems. This purging process was especially necessary because we had hired only veterans, well-seasoned readers who had participated in many holistic readings by this time. We also worked hard the first day to separate D&F features from C&E features so the two discourse feature scores would remain distinct. For this reason, raters had copies of both feature scales. But by the end of the first day, all C&E readers were aware of narrowing their sights to Correctness and Efficiency matters only.

Another recurring problem on the first day of the reading in the C&E room was the distinction between the scores of 3 and 4 on our guide. We clarified this distinction by describing the 4 paper as correct, but flat and the 3 as containing noticeably more inefficiencies and errors than a 4. At this point, we also strongly encouraged the readers to use both ends of the scale (6 and 1) in an effort to spread these scores out as much as possible and, thus, get the most information possible from the scale. Finally, in our room in particular, we had to realize that ESL features in a paper did not automatically indicate a lower-half paper. Regular group training sessions, using sample papers and discussion, kept reinforcing the criteria of the scoring guide.

In general, the readers adapted quickly and positively to the task at hand. They were especially responsive to the novelty of their assignment, and the atmosphere in the C&E room was one of cooperation and involvement. The readers enthusiastically received this new scoring guide and expressed their interest, both explicitly and implicitly, in furthering our efforts to discover any relationships we could among program, classroom, and student writer. Our rest breaks were filled with lively conversation, often about writing in general or the research project in particular. And constructive discussions about the topic itself, the discourse blocks, the scoring guide, student papers, and related ideas continued intermittently through dinner and the late evening hours.

The Development and Focus Reading. This room was set up for three reading tables, each with an experienced table leader. David Rankin was chief reader in this room, and one member of the research panel was a table leader. The other two table leaders were recruited from the ranks of holistic scorers, and were widely respected faculty with much table leading experience.

The procedures in the D&F reading room were similar to those already described for the holistic and C&E readings and need not be further detailed here. The major challenge to the readers, all of them experienced English teachers, was to move past the surface of the student prose in order to discover and score the movement of thought beneath the prose. At the same time, the readers needed to be careful to score what the students actually did write, not what an inventive reader might have written on the same subject. While most readers found it both possible and interesting to do this, a few felt themselves hemmed in and a few others felt that the distinction we were making between D&F and C&E matters was too artificial for comfort.

Nonetheless, the scoring proceeded with substantial agreement about scores. A lively debate about the relation of thought to writing was stirred by this scale, and discussions about rhetoric and teaching went on well into the night. Every teacher who scored D&F was likely to review his/her teaching and grading practices in the light of what that scale revealed about individual responses to student writing. At the end of the reading there was general agreement that, no matter what the results of the scoring for the research project, this scale had provoked an important in-service training seminar.

Discrepancy Scores. We resolved discrepancy scores in the same way we did for the holistic scoring (see discussion above). The table leaders and chief reader for each scale would read essays with discrepant scores on that scale and give an independent third score. This score was used to resolve the discrepancy in accordance with the established holistic pattern. All discrepancies were resolved before the paper was allowed to move on to readers using the other scale in the next room.

Descriptive Data for the Essay Scores

Reliability of Rater Scores

Reliability of essay rating scales has been and continues to be the main problems clouding the use of direct measures of writing. The usual statistical methods used to determine the reliability of multiple choice tests are not appropriate for measures that rate what is essentially a one-item test, the student essay. After wrestling with this problem, we have decided to offer a set of indicators; no one indicator is sufficient in itself to describe the stability of scale scores.

As our first indicator, we offer inter-rater correlations for each scale. The correlation coefficient demonstrates the extent to which our raters tended to use the scale intervals in the same way. Though raters may not have given exactly the same score to a paper, the high correlation coefficients indicate that scorers did tend to "move in the same direction" on the scale when giving scores. The coefficient for holistic scale scorers is .75 (N = 3408 score pairs). The coefficients for the two Feature scales are slightly lower: .67 for the C&E scale (N = 3420 score pairs) and .66 for the D&F scale (N = 3280).

The difference in correlation coefficients between the Feature scales and the holistic scale most likely reflects the difference in readers' experience with the two kinds of scales. Holistic scoring has been the dominant scoring methodology for judging student essays for over a decade. Both for essay exams on their own campuses and in multi-campus essay readings, the readers selected for this study have had a great deal of experience using holistic scoring guides to rate essays written in response to a given topic. On the other hand, it is safe to say that these readers (and readers, generally) have never used a Feature measure as we have defined it.

Our second indicator of reliability is the proportion of score pairs with a discrepancy of two or more points. Papers with such a discrepancy received a third, independent reading by the chief reader or one of the table leaders for that scale. As we made clear in our discussion of the holistic scoring procedure, we considered one-point differences between raters' scores within an acceptable range of agreement. This is in part based upon our belief in the existence of papers that demonstrate a level of skill that falls between two categories; that is, there are papers that are best described as "7s" (sum of scores of "4" and "3"), not "8s" and not "6s." It is also based upon the recognition that papers in any one category of a six-point scale vary in quality; there are "high 4s" and "low 4's" and "solid 4s." Thus a paper scored "7" is likely to be a "high 3/low 4" paper; whereas a paper scored "8" is most likely a solid 4.

Our discrepancy rate counts only those papers whose reader scores differed by more than one point, requiring a third reading to receive a score. This rate is an indication of the amount of disagreement between raters. On the holistic scale, the discrepancy rate is 2.8%; only 94 papers out of the 3408 scored required a third reading. On the C&E scale, the discrepancy rate is 5.3%, or 181 papers out of 3420. For the D&F scale, the rate of 11.9% indicates 391 papers out of 3280.

Scale Means and Score Distributions

The Tables and Figures which are referred to in the following discussion are collected below at the end of this chapter and are also given in the Appendix volume.

The Holistic Scale. Scores on the holistic scale range from a low of "2" to a high of "12" (scores used in analysis are the sum of both readers' score). Table 6.2 presents the frequency data for the Holistic scale. The average score on this scale is 7.16 with a standard deviation of 1.85. Thus it appears that the holistic scale worked as holistic scales should, spreading papers out around a center point (on the 10 point range of 2 to 12; the exact middle score is 5 + 2, or 7).

The C&E Scale. The C&E scale also used all categories in the range (2 to 12), though considerably fewer papers are found in the lowest category, "2." Table 6.3 presents the frequency data for the C&E scale. The mean for scores on C&E is 7.68, higher than that for holistic scores. The standard deviation is somewhat less also, 1.53. This is one scale, however, where the mode statistic is much more revealing than the mean, and the mode for C&E is a score of "8." About a third of the papers, 34.6%, received two "4" scores.

The D&F Scale. Students seemed to have fared far better on the D&F scale than on either of the other two scales. The mean on the scale is 7.95, almost an "8" and considerably higher than the bare "7" (7.16) of the holistic scale. As with the C&E scale, the mode is "8." The standard deviation for D&F, 1.55, is also nearly the same as that for C&E. Table 6.4 contains frequency distributions for scores on the D&F scale. The fewer number of cases for D&F (140 less than C&E) results from the exclusion rule for papers that did not contain an indentifiable discourse block. These papers were given two "9s" (for "missing data") and were not scored on D&F, though they did receive C&E scores. The "9 papers" are not necessarily badly written papers; in several cases the papers did not address the given writing task or did not assume an expository approach to the task (we received a number of personal narratives, often chronologies, on "changes" students had experienced.)

Relationships Among Scales

Correlations between scales indicate the degree to which there is a relationship between skill level on one scale and skill level on another. The coefficient for holistic and C&E score pairs is positive and moderate, .56. For holistic and D&F the coefficient is significantly lower, though positive, .47. The relation between the two Feature scores is .49. Thus it appears there is more in common in the holistic and C&E scale scores than in any comparisons of those scales with the D&F scale.

Scatterplots charting the frequency of each score pair for holistic and C&E, holistic and D&F, and C&E and D&F are included at the end of this chapter as Figures 6.1 through 6.3 (respectively). In all three comparisons we find very few extreme outliers, where a paper received a high score on one scale and a low score on the other. For the most part, the frequencies drop off rather quickly as score pairs begin to move in opposite directions (high on one scale, low on the other). This is particularly true for the holistic and C&E scales.

We discuss next the interrelations among scales and various interpretations of the meaning of the distributions of scores on each essay measure. The success of our Feature measures and discourse block approach opens many new approaches (and questions) for measurement and teaching. Though the essay measures are mainly intended to serve our analyses of program and instructor group differences, we believe we have explored important new territory with our procedures for measurement.

Discussion of Questions Raised by the Descriptive Data

Why are the D&F scores statistically higher than the holistic or C&E scores?

1. The passages selected as Discourse Blocks (DBs) were the best examples of D&F in the composition. It is clear that some students are able to handle paragraph-level development (if not actual paragraphing), but less adept at whole-theme control--a situation which results in higher D&F scores than holistic scores. In the following paper, the marked discourse block is indicated in bold face:

Student Sample A: Hol 6 D&F 7 C&E 8 (Two-score totals)

> When the Susan B. Anthony coin was produced and distributed, most people thought it was a good idea; but some unforeseen and unfortunate consequences turned up to turn a lot of people against them.
>
> Before the coin came out, most people found it more conventient to carry paper money around in their pockets

instead of the large, heavy silver dollars.

Then the Susan B. Anthony silver dollar came out. It was smaller than the usual silver dollar. It had the face of a women who became famous in the 1920's when she urged women to vote. Many people said the coin was "cute" and rushed to their banks to exchange some of their money for the coins.

Unfortunately, people started to become unhappy with the coin. Many mistook it for a quarter when they paid for something and they lost money. People had to examine their coins everytime they used them to make sure they were not going to accidently give away a Susan B. Anthony coin instead of a quarter. Some kids who played video games did not mind the coin because certain games had slots for it and they could put one coin in and get four games.

Now, many people do not use the Susan B. Anthony coin. It is still around; but most people collect them or give them away as gifts. As a result, people have gone back to the old way of carrying paper money.

The first three paragraphs above show serious lack of development. The student's topic seemed to afford him/her only a single paragraph idea to develop. The marked DB moves from the contract sentence to either 3 or 2 levels of specification, depending upon the reading:

Reading A:

1. Unfortunately, people started to become unhappy with the coin.

2. Many people mistook it for a quarter . . .
    3. People had to examine their coins . . .

Reading B:

1. Unfortunately, people started to become unhappy with the coin.
    2. Many people mistook it for a quarter . . .
    2. People had to examine their coins . . .

The last sentence in the DB ("Some kids who played video games . . ."), which seems to contradict the sense of the passage, moves back to level 1.

Note that one reader may judge that the sentence "People had to examine . . ." as a third level of generalization; a second reader may see the same sentence as a second level of support for the first sentence. Small variations of this sort will naturally occur when readers who read rapidly have to make subtle distinctions: clearly the "many people mistook it for a quarter" sentence develops directly the idea of the unhappiness of the public. However, that "people had to examine their coins" may give a consequence--or further development--of the level-two sentence preceding.

We might also note that though the student had little to write about the topic, he or she demonstrated relatively better control of C&E. The holistic raters were not, however, lulled by the cleanness of the prose.

The paper also demonstrates clear awareness of focusing. Each paragraph begins with some temporal marker: "When," "Before the coin came out," "Then," "Unfortunately, people started to become," and "Now."

2. Another probable explanation for higher D&F than C&E scores is that the D&F rater must overlook the surface infelicities of first-draft prose that can irritate a reader. In fact, D&F readers must mentally correct for such errors in order to concentrate upon the levels of development and upon the focusing devices:

Student Sample B

> "Thus, this fact may me decide to major in computer science . . ." (The reader corrects and reads made for may.)

Sometimes, however, the lexical gap, while still not necessarily a developmental weakness, becomes so inarticulate that readers cannot be sure what development is occurring:

> ". . . to major in computer science [the previous student sentence continues] and probably even deeper like in electrical engineering."

It is impossible to discern in what way electrical engineering is supposed to be "even deeper" than computer science, if, indeed, that is the meaning intended. The D&F readers were trained to overcome the problems caused by surface clutter in reading for D&F, although some were more inventive in their mental editing than were others.

Why are there so few low scores on the D&F scale?

1. Perhaps the most obvious response to this question is that the DB selections represented the best D&F passages in the

student composition. Even low level writers were typically able to move from the general to the specific at least in the marked DB. In some cases, low scoring students wrote only one paragraph. Student Sample A (above) exemplifies a similar problem at a slightly higher level: the student, though he or she writes a whole "paper," really has only one paragraph to develop. The rest of the material is presented scatter-gun fashion, with very little coherence and development. But the selected DB shows the student at the highest level, indicating the ability to develop and focus, though the student may practice that ability only occasionally.

2. The paucity of low scores on D&F may also be explained by the timing of the writing sample, which was collected at the end of the term. Students had, by this point, been exposed to at least one semester or one quarter of composition instruction. Most freshman composition courses are designed to teach "academic thinking" as part of the instruction. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the principle of paragraphs structured upon the explicit "topic sentence" with specific support. In addition, the nature of the essay question almost forced the students to make contract statements and then to support them.

What is the Relationship of Focus to Coherence in D&F Scoring?

Coherence is the same as Focus, in the sense that coherence indicates a flow or smoothness in prose. Composition instructors normally teach coherence through the use of pronoun reference, repetition of key words, transitions, and subordinate syntactic structures (embedding, advertial clauses, participle and gerund phrases) and through the order and connectedness of ideas in a passage.

Focus does all this, but it also carries an additional dimension of audience awareness. Focus uses the devices of coherence to help the reader stay on track. At the upper ranges (D&F scores 10-12), focusing devices begin to appear to suggest that the writer understands that a writer-reader dialog is taking place. The writer may include asides and parentheses that do not so much serve for cohesion as for cementing the rhetorical writer-reader bond--which relationship, by the way, may strengthen the principle of development of the contract statement. (Perhaps the writer even invites the reader to share his or her point of view rather directly. Certainly this is true of clever political writing.) Student sample C (below), with a D&F score of 10, offers several examples of more sophisticated focusing: "(rarely communist)," paragraph 1, and "(and could still)" and "our words are credible," paragraph 2.

What is the relationship of Development to Focus in D&F scoring?

1. Development without Focus produces little more than an outline. Utterances starkly delivered, without the connective tissue of transitions, repetitions, paraphrase, and relationship markers, can make for very difficult reading. The DB which follows, taken from a paper on the concept of limited warfare, shows a sophisticated awareness of audience and of connected discourse.

Student Sample C: Hol 7 D&F 10 C&E 8

(Italics added to emphasize focusing devices)

Yet Korea was a transitional area. *It* was where we changed from "traditional" warfare to a new *form*. *This new form, developed by Henry Kissinger*, is called limited war. *It* stemmed from the United States' need to assert its "credibility" as a power, when dealing with other nations (*rarely communist*), *and also* from its *fear* of future large scale confrontations.

This fear lay in the fact that a large scale confrontation could have (*and could still*) lead to a nuclear holocaust. *But in direct conflict with this fear*, is the need to make it known that we will do what we say. *Or in other words*, we will use nuclear weapons if we say we will. *Our words are credible*.

Thus, Kissenger developed the concept of limited war, hoping that small demonstrations of will and strength would forever deter the threat of nuclear destruction.

If this passage had lacked the transition words (*yet, but, in other words, thus*) and the post nominal referents (*it, this new form, this fear*), the passage would lose greatly in coherence and the resulting prose would be very difficult indeed to read.

2. The D&F levels may indicate distinct levels of writing skill development: One might note that even writing samples with relatively low D&F scores contained some effective focusing features. This result came as some surprise because the faculty panel had theorized the following:

A. The *D* of D&F scoring rewards "academic thinking" (that is, the development of ideas in a linear fashion, moving from general to specific) no matter how clumsy or lacking other features of academic prose.

B. The *F* of D&F indicates the degree of control over the conventions of audience-based discourse.

C. *D* probably represents a more elementary level of writing competence; *F* ought to be a higher level skill.

However, an examination of several of the lowest D&F passages in our sample suggests that the developing writer may acquire a sense of audience at a relatively early stage.

Student Sample D: Hol 3 D&F 4 C&E 5

> *But, in the long run*, there is no question that with the advance[d] development of nuclear weapons and the constant use of this policy, a third world war is not far from becomming a reality.
>
> *If* the United States constantly tries to help poor countries, in central America. They [sic] number [of] rebels which are opposed to the present govenment will grow in alarming numbers. *It's* not because *their* opposition to the government, *but* to *their* opposition to the United State intervention.

Though the student's thinking is not entirely clear and though mechanics in the passage are a real problem, the passage shows a solid awareness of audience in the use of conjunctions and pronouns and in the rather surprising sense of syntactic balance in the last quoted sentence, which hints at a knowledge of sentence-level style for rhetorical effect.

The next student sample also illustrates the degree to which a weak student writer may have gained control over focus, despite an inability to control very much else:

Student Sample E: Hol 6 D&F 5 C&E 7

> With the signing of an artist to a record company, one hopes the [sic] to develop ones sound and become "individual" but popular. Unfortunately, most of the time this is not a feasible belief, and the former breaks down only to increase the popularity. Once under the jurisdiction of a mega-corporation interested only in it's assets, all care for personal beliefs and desires are swept under the big rug of Big business.

Once again, a relatively low-level passage is well marked for the audience; the student understands the need for focus.

The next passage contains an unusual amount of surface clutter arising from poor spelling and mechanics. The topic deals with poisoned Tylenol--spelled several ways in the passage.

Student Sample F: Hol 4 D&F 5 C&E 3

> Now that there has been about ten deaths the corporation has decided to make Tamper free capsusals, that cannot be opened. This would never have happened if they would not of tired to cut cost so and make a cheaper Item. After all of the attion that this has arroused in the media it his [has?] caused telinal a great deal of money because of the recall of all of the tablets, and the law suits that

> were filed against them. It will also be a long term effect on them because it will be a long time before anyone will have faith in them again and will belive that this drug is safe for the consumer. Maybe this will prove to be a lession that they won't forget easly.

Though Sample F seems to reflect rather rudimentary writing skills, some sense of focus is evident. The student writer mars the effect of focus by the inaccurate and inconsistent use of the pronouns them, this, and it, especially evident toward the end of the passage, indicating perhaps that the student cannot yet sustain effective focus for the length of a paragraph. One might note that much of the focusing in the passage might well be a carry-over from the oral equivalent of audience focusing. And, indeed, this oral custom may account for much of the focus in very low-level papers.

Student Sample G: Hol 5 D&F 5 C&E 5

> While the plane started out as a means of transportation, it expanded and improved until it was used for destructive purposes. Man's innovation for good and the welfare of all turned into a bad and menece to people's lives. Can the airplane evolve into another purpose? And will this purpose be good or evil? Only future generations can answer these questions.

Though one might quarrel with the effectiveness of the rhetorical questions and the rather lame response in the last sentence, this developing writer shows through these questions a keen awareness that he or she is writing for an audience.

It would seem then that even very low level writers begin to master both development and focusing skills at a relatively early stage. Our statistics seem to show that C&E mastery may be more difficult--at least in first-draft writing; fewer students scored in the upper half of the range on C&E.

General Observations and Recommendations on the Differences Among the Three Scales

1. D&F scoring may measure more readily learned aspects of expository writing, especially in first-draft writing. First, the ideas used to develop the contract statement must precedeall other aspects (C, E, or F), certainly in the writer's mind if not actually upon the page. In the D&F scale, on reported scores of 2 through 8, the most important scoring decisions are made on the basis of development, the presence or absence of focusing markers serving to fine tune the scoring. But many of the focus markers, as we saw in Student Sample F, are typical of oral dialect.

For many students, C&E (and perhaps even F) may represent a later activity in the writing process. While professional writers and other experienced writers seem to practice a more recursive writing process, the fledgling writer may still be "adding on" those features closer to the surface as part of a later revising and proofreading stage. The student writing samples in the project do reflect the typical surface features of unedited, first-draft writing.

2. The closer statistical connection between holistic scores and C&E scores suggests that holistic readings may in fact place greater stress upon C&E matters than they sometimes claim

to do. Because the D&F scoring did not clearly distribute the better writers along the top half of the scale, there is reason to believe that D&F scoring may actually reward efforts in the process or drafting stages better than do the two other kinds of scoring.

3. It would follow then, that instructors in developmental or remedial writing classes might attempt to evaluate student progress more in terms of D&F, rather than holding rigid demands for correctness, which appears to be one of the last aspects of writing to develop as academically acceptable--especially in the writing of students with strong oral dialect influence or second language influence.

4. Since D&F scores did not occur at the very lowest ranges (combined scores of 2 and 3), one might ask if a six-point scale is in fact appropriate to this kind of measurement. We cannot answer the question based on the data which we obtained. All our student samples came from students completing the freshman composition (Community College transfer-level) course; one would expect the students to have sufficient writing practice and instruction to be aware of audience and the need to develop ideas. To find examples of the lowest ranges of D&F, we would need to examine the writing of what Mina Shaughnessy (1977) called Basic Writers, those at a much lower level of achievement.

Observations on the Meaning of the Data

Mode and Mean

Mode: Holistic = 7
Development and Focus = 8
Correctness and Efficiency = 8

The most common score on the holistic scale is a 3-4 split, or a tendency toward competence, straddling the fence between lower- and upper-half. The mode from the Feature scorings represents the agreement of two readers on the score of 4 and, though suggesting only minimum competence, is a score that falls completely in the upper-half of both scales.

Mean: Holistic = 7.16
Development and Focus = 7.95
Correctness and Efficiency = 7.68

The highest mean score is from the Development and Focus reading with Correctness and Efficiency .33 points below it. The mean holistic score is then .52 points below the mean Correctness and Efficiency score (or .85 points below the mean Development and Focus score).

Analysis. The mean and mode are higher on the Feature scales than on the holistic scale perhaps because more students achieved competence in the specific tasks of development, focus, correctness, and efficiency in a limited stretch of discourse (the hand-picked DBs) and have more trouble sustaining this degree of competence for the complete essay.

Standard Deviation

Standard Deviation: Holistic = 1.85
Development and Focus = 1.55
Correctness and Efficiency = 1.53

The range of C&E and D&F scores is very similar, with the D&F readers using .02 points more of the scale than the C&E readers. The holistic readers, however, used more of their scale than the Feature scale readers.

Analysis. All three scales strike a workable balance between norm and criterion referencing. However, the holistic scale tends toward norm-referencing despite the criterion-referenced scoring guide in that it asks the readers to rank the papers in a given reading from best to worst on overall quality. The task of ranking generally obliges readers to use the entire range of scores and hence to rate papers in relation to each other. In addition, the readers working with the holistic scale had many more factors to juggle in their assessment of student performance and were thus more likely to find a fuller range of scores than the Feature scale readers.

Both Feature scales, on the other hand, tend to be more fully criterion-referenced in their search for a certain level of competence in both areas connected with our expectations of student skills at the end of one term of freshman composition. Though these Feature scales are both descriptive, their evolution was governed by our own classroom experience. On both of the Feature scales a single score of 4 represents a certain level of mastery and competence, an issue that we were not so concerned with on the holistic scale. As a result, these scales were used more to measure performance in relation to a set of agreed upon expectations in freshman composition than to measure performance relative to the other essays in the student sample (as the holistic scale tended to do).

Upper-Half Scores

Percent of Upper-Half Scores (no 3's):

Holistic	44.1%
Correctness and Efficiency	60.2%
Development and Focus	63.7%

More students were able to achieve competence on the Feature scales than on the holistic scales. A similar percent of students achieved upper-half scores on both Feature scales.

Analysis. In the holistic reading, we thought that strengths and weaknesses would balance each other simply by virtue of the fact that the scale contains numerous elements that complement one another. But the results show us that the weaknesses essentially outweigh the strengths in our students' writing in a holistic scoring (55.9% lower-half papers). If our students' D&F and C&E abilities in a limited range (in a DB) bring their scores up, then probably their inability to sustain these skills for an entire paper is one of the main reasons for the lower holistic scores.

The act of block marking itself undoubtedly played a part in raising the Feature scores higher than the holistic scores. But beyond this difference, the 3.5% more D&F than C&E upper-half papers might be accounted for by the difference in reader expectations derived from the scale. C&E is essentially a reader-based scale that demands socially acceptable, edited prose. Concerned more with product than process, it insists upon a clear sense of audience and purpose on both the word and sentence level throughout a DB. The D&F scale, on the other hand, attends more to process than the CE scale does and is writer-based in that it rewards thinking and assumes that the expository delineation of those thoughts is a more sophisticated skill; D&F readers expected to work harder to understand papers that receive lower-half scores and less hard to understand the upper-half papers. In this regard, the D&F scale seems to measure a more readily acquired ability than does C&E.

One final piece of information the higher number of upper-half D&F papers provides us with is the possibility that students learn development and focus relatively easily in a writing class. After mastering these skills early in the term, they then turn their attention to their C&E abilities. The D&F scores, then, are higher in comparison to the C&E scores because the former scale measures skills that the students have been practicing successfully for a longer time than the latter scale measures.

The Frequency of the Score of 8

Frequencies	Absolute	Percent
Holistic 8s	763	22.4%
Correctness and Efficiency 8s	1182	34.6%
Development and Focus 8s	935	28.5%

A large number of papers scored 8 (two 4s) on the C&E scale--12.2% more than on the holistic scale and 6.1% more than on the D&F scale. Over half of the 60.2% of the students who wrote upper-half C&E papers fall into the 8 category.

Analysis. The combined scores of 10, 11, and 12 are really beyond the freshman composition range. Since we believe that students confront and solve their D&F problems early in a term and then begin to struggle with C&E, the high number of C&E 8s might be accounted for by the fact that many students are just pulling out of the 3 range on the C&E scale, demonstrating competence in this range at the end of their freshman composition requirement. Furthermore, many students in freshman compostion enter that course having achieved basic competence in writing as demonstrated on the English Placement Test. After one term of freshman composition, this competence is often even higher.

An additional explanation relates to the higher correlation of C&E scores with the holistic scores than we expected. Since C&E measures product and reader-based prose, we would expect the greater number of 8s to appear on the D&F scale, which rewards students more for tendencies to think and less for polish and editing skills. But if EPT readers tend to read more for C&E than for D&F, then more students capable of C&E 4s are already in freshman composition at the beginning of the term. Also, this score might be an indication that freshman composition professors put more of their instructional energy into the concrete components of the C&E scale than into the abstract, slippery, and more difficult to teach D&F material. Further, teaching expectations at the end of freshman composition might be more aligned with C&E than with D&F.

Lower-half C&E scores suggest substantial problems managing the written code, some degree of oral interference with the written dialect, and important problems in composing reader-based prose. Upper-half scores suggest more sophistication on the part of the writer, a discernible degree of control over the written dialect on both the sentence and word levels, and the ability to compose reader-based rather than writer-based prose.

Small Variations in Scoring: Odd and Even Scores

Odd and Even Scores	% Even Scores	% Odd Scores
Holistic	51.5%	48.6%
Correctness and Efficiency	56.7%	43.4%
Development and Focus	53.9%	46.1%

The even scores are 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12; the odd, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11. The even scores demonstrated agreement between the two readers on each scale, while the odd scores represent "split" scores such as 3/4, 5/6, etc. The scores on over half of the papers in each reading were given the same scores. The highest degree of agreement on the scores is, once again, on the Feature scales, with C&E scores showing the most agreement of all.

Analysis. This high degree of agreement on the C&E scores suggests, first, a fairly high level of accord on what C&E is and, second, more elements from this scale in traditional (and continuing) grading practices. D&F features inspire a bit more disagreement than the C&E features and are probably slightly less popular in the grading schemes in writing classes. The fact that the features on the holistic scale foster the least agreement and are less consistently used in classroom grading scales should not surprise us when we consider the number of holistic features on this scale and the varied interpretations they traditionally arouse.

Meaning of the Correlations Between Scales

Correlations

Holistic with C&E	.56
Holistic with D&F	.47
C&E with D&F	.49

Analysis. The holistic scores are most highly correlated with the C&E scores perhaps because both tend to measure product rather than process. They are both concerned with the final writing specimen and its appeal to its intended audience. The

D&F scale (which has the lower correlation with the holistic scale) is unique in that it attempts to measure the student's mind behind the product, or process.

The real surprise here is the higher correlation ofholistic with C&E than the correlation of the Feature scales with each other. We expected the Feature scale correlation to be noticeably the highest because of the block marking; both Feature scores attend to the same block of prose, presumably the best one, while the holistic score is based on the essay as a whole. Thus the high correlation of the holistic and C&E scores probably understates their relationship, since they are based on different quantities of writing. This link of C&E with holistic scoring is a bit disquieting, since most holistic scoring guides (including ours) attempt to direct reader attention to D&F matters at least as strongly as to C&E issues.

Table 6.2

Frequency Distribution of Scores for the Holistic Scale

Score	Absolute Frequency	Percent of Total Papers
2	44	1.3 %
3	82	2.4
4	152	4.5
5	293	8.6
6	551	16.1
7	784	22.9
8	763	22.3
9	429	12.6
10	213	6.3
11	69	2.0
12	28	.8
	3408	100.0%

Mean = 7.16 Median = 7.24 Mode = 7.00
Standard Deviation = 1.85

Table 6.3

Frequency Distribution of Scores for the Correctness and Efficiency Scale

Score	Absolute Frequency	Percent of Total Papers
2	12	.4 %
3	20	.6
4	68	2.0
5	153	4.5
6	426	12.4
7	682	19.9
8	1182	34.6
9	551	16.1
10	220	6.4
11	80	2.3
12	26	.8
	3420	100.0%

Mean = 7.68 Median = 7.80 Mode = 8.00
Standard Deviation = 1.53

Table 6.4

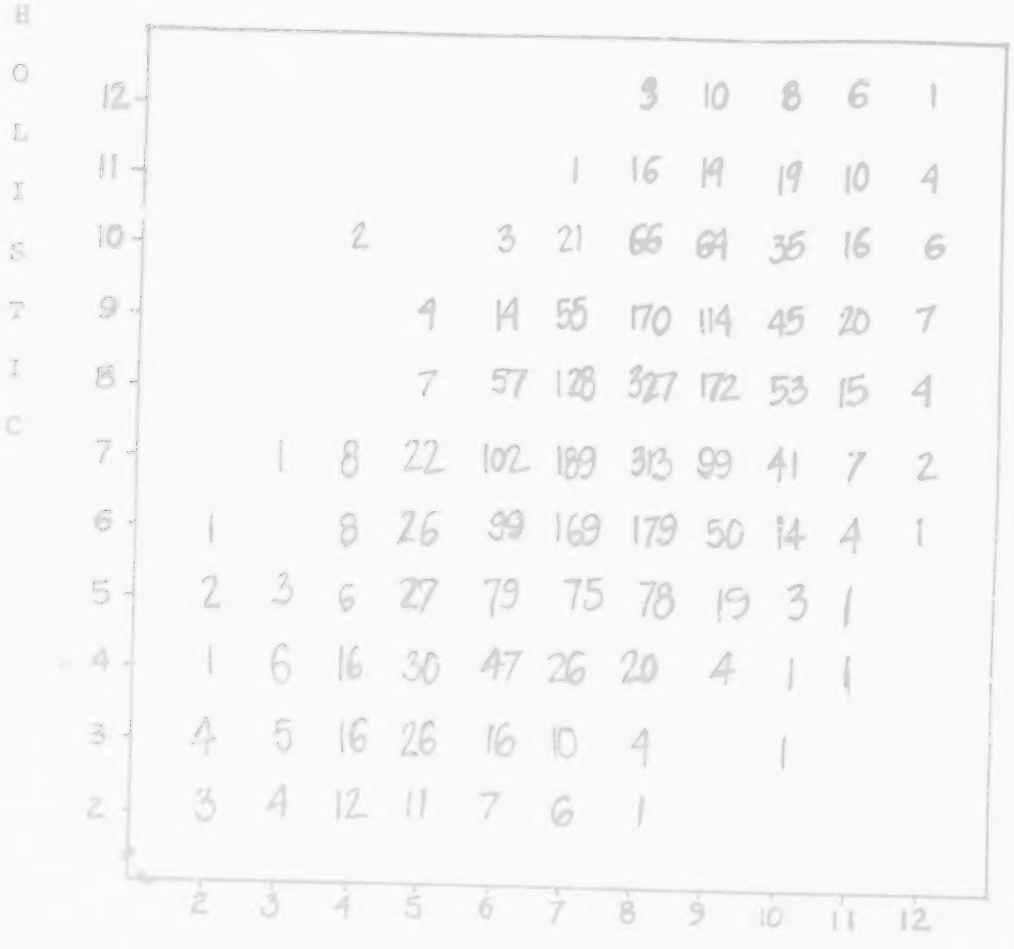
Frequency Distribution of Scores
for the Development and Focus Scale

Score	Absolute Frequency	Percent of Total Papers
2	2	.1%
3	1	.1
4	62	1.9
5	130	4.0
6	355	10.8
7	640	19.5
8	935	28.5
9	634	19.3
10	387	11.8
11	108	3.3
12	25	.8
	3280	100.0%

Mean = 7.95 Median = 7.98 Mode = 8.00
Standard Deviation = 1.55

Figure 6.1

Scatterplot of the Correlations between Scores on the Holistic and Correctness and Efficiency Scales



HOLISTIC	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
12							3	10	8	6	1
11						1	16	19	19	10	4
10			2		3	21	66	69	35	16	6
9				9	14	55	170	114	45	20	7
8				7	57	128	327	172	53	15	4
7		1	8	22	102	189	313	99	41	7	2
6	1		8	26	99	169	179	50	14	4	1
5	2	3	6	27	79	75	78	19	3	1	
4	1	6	16	30	47	26	20	4	1	1	
3	4	5	16	26	16	10	4		1		
2	3	4	12	11	7	6	1				

CORRECTNESS AND EFFICIENCY

R = .56 $p < .001$ N = 3408

Figure 6.2

Scatterplot of the Correlations between Scores on the Holistic and Development and Focus Scales

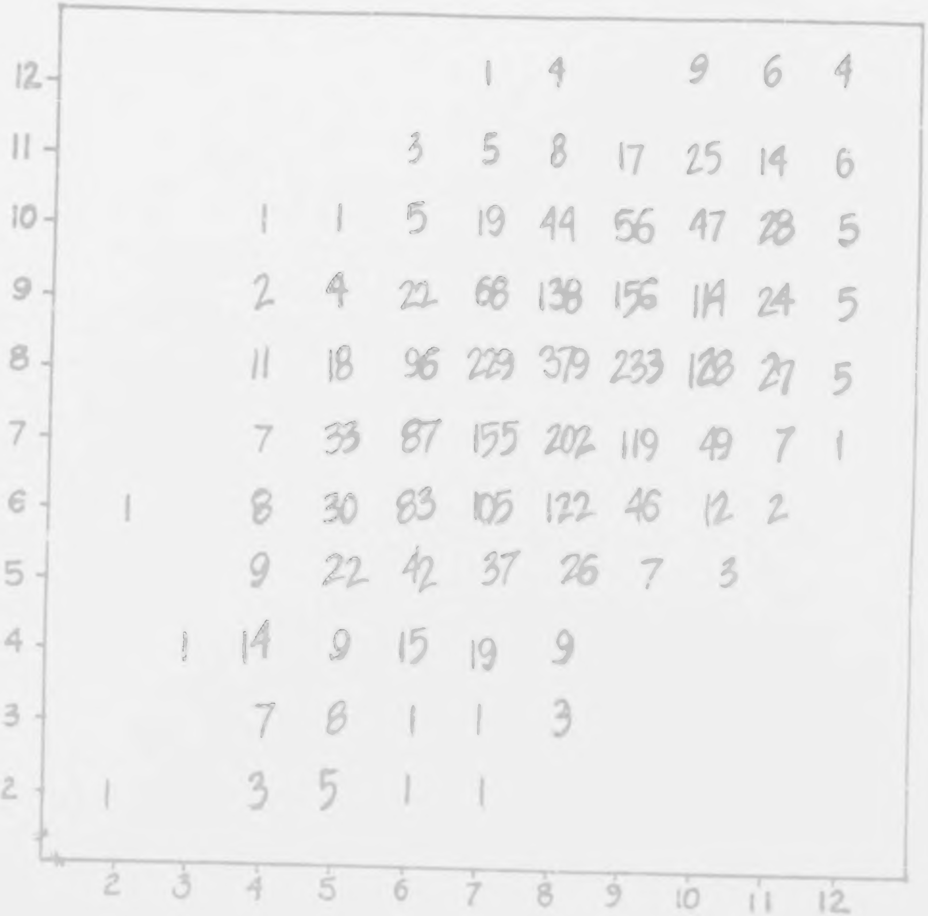
HOLISTIC	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
12						1	5	5	9	6	2
11						4	12	16	19	11	7
10			1		8	26	55	43	49	21	5
9			2	1	22	76	91	111	82	25	6
8			2	6	50	111	247	194	105	24	2
7			7	27	89	163	233	146	77	15	4
6			6	19	84	128	170	81	36	4	
5	1		11	24	48	70	75	30	6	1	
4			8	22	35	33	35	6	4	1	
3			15	18	15	20	8	2			
2	1	1	10	13	4	7	2				

DEVELOPMENT AND FOCUS

R = .47 $p < .001$ N = 3277

Figure 6.3

Scatterplot of the Correlations between Scores on the Correctness and Efficiency and the Development and Focus Scales



CORRECTNESS & EFFICIENCY

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
12						1	4		9	6	4
11					3	5	8	17	25	14	6
10			1	1	5	19	44	56	47	28	5
9			2	4	22	68	138	156	114	24	5
8			11	18	96	229	379	233	128	27	5
7			7	33	87	155	202	119	49	7	1
6	1		8	30	83	105	122	46	12	2	
5			9	22	42	37	26	7	3		
4		1	14	9	15	19	9				
3			7	8	1	1	3				
2	1		3	5	1	1					

DEVELOPMENT & FOCUS

R = .49 P < .001 N = 3280

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE STUDENT SELF-PERCEPTION MEASURE

Rationale and Theory

We have been aware of the need for multiple measures of complex phenomena throughout the project. Although we are principally interested in the collection and evaluation of writing behavior as our student outcome measure, there is some evidence to suggest that changes in self-perception precede behavioral change. In an area as complex as writing, a skill our student sample has been developing for over a decade, it seemed possible that changes in the way students see themselves as writers might turn out to be more prominent than performance change as the result of a relatively short-term learning experience. We were also interested in possible links between patterns of self-perception by students and patterns of organization within writing programs.

Instrument Development

For these reasons, we decided to include a brief self-perception measure along with our direct writing measure. We developed a set of thirteen questions for students to complete before writing to the assigned topic. The questionnaire items were designed to relate specifically to the goals of freshman composition instruction. After substantial discussion and revision of drafts, two versions of the questionnaire were pre-tested on the freshmen who also pre-tested the direct writing measure at San Bernardino Valley Community College. Two staff members discussed with a variety of students at the community college their experience in filling in the self-perception questions; the students pointed out some problems they had discovered. After review of the discussion and the pre-test results, we adopted a slightly revised version to be printed on the front page of the student essay booklet. Figure 7.1 shows the final version of the student questionnaire; the actual layout as found in the student test booklet can be found in the Appendix (Volume II of this report).

Even before the final revision, we had some evidence that the self-perception measure was generally valid. After we scored the pre-test essays, to evaluate the essay question, and after we reviewed the responses to the self-perception measures, we did a rough comparison of mean essay score for each of the seven classes with the responses to the questionnaire. It was obvious that the sections (chosen randomly) with the highest mean essay scores also had many more positive responses to the questionnaire.

We were later able to group the questions into factors having to do with 1) student self-perceptions of their improvement in writing ability as a cognitive activity as a result of the writing program ("Cognition"), 2) their sense of their improved ability to judge accurately the quality of their writing and to understand how to revise it ("Revision Process"), and 3) their perceptions about their enhanced ability to revise their writing effectively ("Revision Success).

Figure 7.1

Student Self-Perception Checklist

Instructions to the student:

> **Listed below are a few of the ways in which students might change as a result of writing instruction they receive. Consider your own experiences with writing instruction on this campus (including this and other writing classes, any tutoring or learning center assistance in writing). Think about the ways you've changed as a result of those instructional experiences. Check only those changes which you feel apply to you.**

_____1. I have more confidence when I write.

_____2. I find I have more to say now when I write.

_____3. In some ways, I find it easier to get started on a writing assignment.

_____4. I'm more likely to think of my audience (readers) as I write.

_____5. Now, when I write my ideas out I understand them better.

_____6. As a result of my writing instruction I'm a better reader now.

_____7. I'm more likely to revise my first attempt at writing an essay or a paper.

_____8. I'm better able to find any weak spots in my own writing now.

_____9. I find I'm better able to improve my writing when I revise.

_____10. I'm a better judge of the overall quality of my own writing now.

_____11. What I've learned in writing instruction has helped in my writing for other classes.

_____12. I'm a better writer now than I was.

_____13. I HAVE NOT CHANGED IN ANY OF THE WAYS DESCRIBED ABOVE.

Factor Analysis

Student responses to these questions yielded the three factors we described above, loading as follows:

Cognition. This factor contains statements (items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 11) which seem to indicate deeper and easier reflection on the part of the student: greater confidence when I write (loading .55), better writer than I was (.52), understand my own ideas better when I write (.48), what I've learned in composition class has helped in other classes (.45), have more to say (.46), find it easier to get started (.32).

Revision Process. This factor contains statements (items 8 and 10) which suggest a greater understanding of the nature and purpose of revision: easier to find weak spots in my writing (loading .56), and better judge of the quality of writing (.52).

Revision Success. This factor contains statements (items 7 and 9) which seem to indicate more skill and success in writing revision: more likely to revise first drafts (.59), and better able to improve my writing as a result of revision (.52).

Use of the Factors in Data Analysis

The data analysis chapter which follows uses these three factors as variables and notes significant occurrences. The chapter following that one, giving conclusions and recommendations, also speaks to the relationship between the self-perception factors and program differences. The findings support our decision to include this measure. For example, the clear connection between certain aspects of the overall campus climate and students' self perception of their writing ability turns out to be one of our most interesting (if unexpected) discoveries.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RESULTS OF ANALYSES

This chapter presents the results of analyses of two sets of data: student performance and perception data, and descriptive data from our interviews of administrators. The descriptive data were used to define several "independent" variables for use in analysis of student outcomes.

In presenting our analyses, we will only briefly describe the interview variables and the variables obtained from English department Fact Sheets. A longer section of this chapter, immediately following the results of outcome analyses, describes the earlier interview analyses and findings in much greater detail. This section duplicates the chapter on the administrator interviews in the report on Phase I. We include it here for readers who do not have access to the Phase I document.

Analyses of Student Outcomes

Data Preparation

Several sets of preparatory analyses were undertaken before final data analysis. The twelve student perception questions from the front of the essay booklet were gathered into three factors: "cognition," "revision process" and "revision success."

Student Self-Perception Factors (See Chapter Seven)

Cognition. This factor contains statements which seem to indicate deeper and easier reflection on the part of the student: greater confidence when I write (loading .55), better writer than I was (.52), understand my own ideas better when I write (.48), what I've learned in composition class has helped in other classes (.45), have more to say (.46), find it easier to get started (.32).

Revision Process. This factor contains statements which suggest a greater understanding of the nature and purpose of revision: easier to find weak spots in my writing (loading .56), and better judge of the quality of writing (.52).

Revision Success. This factor contains statements which seem to indicate more skill in performance of writing revision: more likely to revise first drafts (.59), and better able to improve my writing as a result of revision (.52).

Student Outcome Data

There are two sources of student outcomes from participation in campus composition programs: (1) essay scores on three different rating scales, and (2) factor scores on three "self-perception" factors. The three scales have been described in Chapter Six; they are referred to here as "C&E" for the Correctness and Efficiency scale, "D&F" for the Development and Focus scale, and "Holistic" for the holistic scale. The three perception factors are labelled "cognition," "revision process" and "revision success." These factors were derived from student answers to the writing perceptions questions on the essay booklet.

Students' essay and factors scores were used as "outcome" variables in analyses of variance and covariance to test effects of program characteristics on students' perceptions of writing and their own writing skills.

Covariates

Despite identical admissions requirements, different campuses of the CSU have student bodies with widely different writing abilities. Chapter Two describes some of those differences, and their causes, noting particularly the ethnic variation and the relative proportion of students who require special assistance before undertaking regular freshman composition instruction. To take into account between-campus differences in the proportion of "remedial" students and "exceptional admits," we have used total scores on the English Placement Test (the EPT: an entry and placement test for identifying remedial writing students) as a covariate in all our analyses, except where noted. (See Chapter Five for a full description of the EPT.) Correlations between the covariate EPT scores and the three essay scores range between .30 and .45. We did not expect higher scores since, theoretically at least, EPT scores represent entry level performance on developmentally easier tasks than those represented by scores on our three essay scales.

Independent Variables

The first two phases of this study generated a large number of variables describing features of composition programs. One set of variables covers only ten of the nineteen campuses; it is derived from our analysis of interview data gathered from those campuses. (The interview-based variables, and values for those variables, are summarized on Table 5.1.) These variables more closely describe program features than do the variables derived from the Fact Sheets sent to each of the nineteen campuses. The latter set of variables tend to describe contextual features of composition programs by cataloging campus characteristics affecting programs, such as staffing and enrollment. (The Fact-Sheet variables, and values for those variables, are summarized on Table 8.2.)

Table 8.1

Interview Variables

Goals Refers to scope of goals & philosophy statements.

1. LAISSEZ-FAIRE. No meaningful goals stmts available.
2. REMEDIAL ONLY. Goals statement focus upon remedial.
3. BOTH REG. & REM'L.

Rem Loc Refers to the location of and responsibility for instruction for "remedial" students.

1. REM'L. ASSISTANCE IS NOT AVAILABLE THROUGH THE ENGL DEPT.
2. DEPT.HASSEPARATE REM'L PROGRAM,NO SPEC'L REM'L COORD.
3. DEPT. HAS SEPARATE REM'L PROGRAM AND REM'L COORDINATOR.

Rem Seq Refers to the actual instructional arrangement for remedial instruction.

1. ADJUNCT ASSISTANCE (THROUGH REG. COMP. CLASS).
2. ONE REMEDIAL COURSE ONLY.
3. "PRE-REMEDIAL" AND REMEDIAL COURSEWORK AVAILABLE.
4. "PRE-REMEDIAL" COURSE AND ADJUNCT REM'L ASSIST (THROUGH REG. COMP.).

Fac Ret'g Refers to the attempts at faculty development or retraining.

1. ACTIVE & AGGRESSIVE FACULTY RETRAINING EFFORTS.
2. NO FACULTY RETRAINING EFFORTS.

UDR Cam Refers to evidence of a "campus-wide" commitment to and/or involvement in the Upper Division Writing Requirement Policy and Procedure.

1. TRULY CAMPUS-WIDE INVOLVEMENT.
2. CAMPUS-WIDE INTEREST, ENGL. DEPT. PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE.
3. ENGL. DEPT. SEES UDR AS ITS DOMAIN, ACTIVELY SEEKS LEADERSHIP ROLE.
4. ENGL. DEPT. PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE, BUT RELUCTANTLY SO.

Table 8.1, continued

UDR Inst Refers to the availability of writing instruction or assistance specifically aimed at students failing the Upper Division Writing Requirement (UDR) for graduation.

1. ON YOUR OWN (NOTHING FORMAL).
2. DEPARTMENT COURSE AVAILABLE.
3. ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE OUTSIDE ENGL DEPT (OFTEN LEARNING CENTER).

UDR Cert Refers to the method of certification for the Upper Division Writing Requirement in use on the campus at the time of the interviews.

1. EXAM ONLY.
2. EXAM OR COURSE.
3. COURSE ONLY.

NonEngl Refers to writing instruction available outside the English department.

1. COURSES AND TUTORS.
2. SPECIALLY FUNDED PROGRAMS.
3. LIMITED ASSISTANCE THROUGH REGULAR SKILLS CENTER.

Table 8.2

Fact Sheet Variables

Eth Bal Refers to the "ethnic" mix of the undergraduate student population.

1. HIGH MINORITY (less than 62% white).
2. RELATIVELY MIXED (62 - 80% white).
3. MOSTLY WHITE (more than 80% white).

Size Refers to undergraduate enrollment at the time of the study.

1. LARGE (over 20,000).
2. MODERATE (10,000 to 20,000).
3. SMALL (under 10,000).

Tenured Refers to the proportion of the full-time English faculty who are tenured.

1. LESS THAN 75%
2. MORE THAN 75%

Part Tm Refers to the percent of the department instructional staff who are part-timers.

1. LESS THAN 25%
2. 25 TO 40%
3. MORE THAN 40%

Program and Campus Features that Affect Student Performance and Self-Perception

Our Phase I research questions were exploratory in nature; because no formal description of college composition programs existed, our aim was to describe in rich detail the status quo. In Phase II, we focused more specifically upon the individual instructional practices of tenured/tenure-track and part-time instructors and the outcomes of instruction. Finally, we have been able to use the descriptive and evaluative data from Phases I and II to determine whether any of the differences in practices we encountered on the nineteen campuses is more or less effective than any other.

We examined the data for effectiveness for all students, regardless of ability (controlling for inter-campus differences in students' entering ability) and analyzed the data. Next we separated those students the CSU system considered eligible for "remedial" instruction on the basis of their placement test scores; we then reanalyzed the data to determine which, if any, program and campus variables seem to affect outcomes for these remedial students. It is important to remember that our "remedial" group is identified by its eligibility for remedial work at entrance; that group produced its outcome data at the same instructional point (end of regular freshman composition instruction) as the group that went directly into freshman composition courses. Thus, the "remedial" group had measurably weaker writing skills in the past, but has perservered through a remedial program and into a regular writing course.

Program Features That Relate to Student Performance and Perceptions

The findings reported in this section result from comparisons of all students, regardless of ability or ethnicity. Differences in scores on the English Placement Test have been entered into these analyses as covariates to control for variations among students' entering level of writing skill. Results of analyses of covariance yield several statistically significant differences for several program features primarily on the "student self-perception" factors. Notably, the C&E and D&F scales yield few significant differences for the all-students sample.

Table 8.3

Summary Statistics for ANCOVA's (All Students)

A. Effects of Program and Campus Features on Holistic Scores

Program Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
Fac Ret'g	10.68 (1)	5.27	.022

Mean Squares for Residual Term = 2.03
N = 860

Campus Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
Tenured	19.65 (1)	9.51	.002

Mean Squares for Residual Term = 2.07
N = 1459

Table 8.3 continued

B. Effect of Program and Campus Features on Correctness and Efficiency Scores

Program Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
Rem Loc	5.04 (2)	5.60	.018

Mean Squares for Residual Term = 1.55
N = 861

C. Effect of Program and Campus Features on Development and Focus Scores

Program Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
UDR Cam	7.32 (3)	3.76	.024

Mean Squares for Residual Term = 1.95
N = 826

Note: Total scores on the English Placement Test (EPT) are used as covariates. Unless reported otherwise, the covariate is significant beyond p = .001 for all ANCOVA models reported here.

Results of Analyses of Covariance for All Students

Program Goals. Differences in program goals (an interview variable) resulted in differences in students' factor scores for "revision success" and "revision process" (p < .01 for both ancovas). In both instances the more positive influence is associated with programs whose goals are best described as "laissez-faire," in contrast to those programs with the most extensive goals statements (covering both remedial and regular courses).

Location of Remedial Assistance. This interview variable affected differences in students' scores on the C&E scale. Significantly higher scores were obtained for students in composition programs with separate remedial "programs" of instruction, managed by the regular composition coordinators ($p =$

Faculty Retraining. Students in programs where there is an active and aggressive faculty retraining effort score significantly higher on the holistic scale than do their peers in programs without the benefit of a sustained faculty development effort ($p = .02$).

Proportion of Tenured Faculty on Staff. Programs in departments with less than 75% tenured faculty seem to produce students who score more highly on the holistic scale ($p < .01$). Students in these programs also score higher on the "revision process" factor ($p = .05$).

Campus Features That Relate to Student Performance and Perceptions

Several variables describing elements of the campus setting emerged as significant in our analyses. Many of these variables are closely related to the way in which campuses established and now implement their policy for certifying upper division writing competence.

Campus Involvement in the Upper Division Requirement. Differences in campus-wide involvement in the certification of upper division students' writing skills (a system-wide requirement for graduation) turned out to be significant in analysis of covariance on the C&E Scale ($p = .03$), and also for two self-perception factors: "cognition" ($p < .01$) and "revision process" ($p = .03$). For both student self-perception factors, major positive influences seem to affect students on campuses where the English department actively claims responsibility for setting and managing the certification process.

Upper Division Writing Instruction. This interview variable actually refers to the availability of writing instruction for students who have failed or are preparing for their upper division writing requirement. Differences in this variable correspond to differences in students' scores on "general cognitive gains" and "revision process" ($p =$ .02 and .03, respectively). Where there is an English department course available for upper division students, students in the freshman composition program perceive greater gains from their lower division instruction.

Certification Method for the Upper Divsion Writing Requirement. On campuses where the certification method for the writing requirement requires students to take an English department course, students in the freshman composition program score lower on "revision success" than do students in programs on campuses offering an exam only or the choice of an exam or course ($p = .01$).

Ethnic Diversity in the Student Population. Where the proportion of minority ethnic groups is highest, students in the composition program score significanty lower on the "cognition" and "revision process" factors (p = .05 and .03 respectively). This variable did not affect essay measures in these analyses done with the entire freshman sample (regardless of ethnicity). Since life on an ethnically diverse campus has an impact on Anglo students as well as on minority students, our analysis suggests that the effect of campus ethnic status may show itself in very subtle ways, as, for example, in students' self-perceptions or expectations rather than in actual academic performance.

Table 8.4

Summary Statistics for ANCOVA's (All Students): Effects of Program and Campus Features on Self-Perception Factor Scores

A. General Cognitive Gains in Writing Skill

Program Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
UDR Inst	13.02 (2)	4.20	.015
UDR Cam	12.27 (3)	3.99	.008

Mean Squares for Residual Term = 3.10
N = 832

Campus Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
Ethnic Bal	9.01 (2)	2.98	.050

Mean Squares for Residual Term = 3.02
N = 1537

Table 8.4 continued

B. Gains in Understanding of the Revision Process

Program Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
Goals	2.69 (2)	4.35	.013
UDR Inst	2.11 (2)	3.40	.034
UDR Cam	1.92 (3)	3.09	.026

Mean Squares for Residual Term = .64
N = 862

Campus Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
Tenured	2.38 (1)	3.89	.049
Ethnic Bal	2.10 (2)	3.43	.033

Mean Squares for Residual Term = .61
N = 1538

C. Increased Skill and Success in Revision

Program Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
Goals	2.74 (2)	5.16	.006
UDR Cert	2.47 (2)	4.64	.010

Mean Squares for Residual Term = .54
N = 862

Note: Total scores on the English Placement Test (EPT) are used as covariates. Unless reported otherwise, the covariate is significant beyond p = .001 for all ANCOVA models reported here.

A Closer Look at "Remedial" Students

To determine whether program features might have a different effect on students of varying writing ability, we conducted a subset of analyses selecting students on the basis of one of two criteria. We labeled as "remedial" those students whose total scores on the English Placement Test were less than or equal to 150. This is the cut-score used to distribute funds to campuses for remedial instruction, though it does not mean that students scoring 150 or less invariably receive remedial instruction. For students whose files did not contain EPT test data, we used a cut-off score of less than or equal to 380 on the SAT-Verbal. Our intent was not to equate the two measures, but to include in this group students without EPT scores who nonetheless had very low scores on a reliable verbal test.

These analyses do not make use of a covariate. Since we selected students on the basis of the EPT, the inclusion of the EPT as a covariate does not make sense and would cost us degrees of freedom (making it more difficult to obtain significant differences).

Program Features Affecting "Remedial" Students

Program Goals. Differences in program goals (an interview variable) resulted in differences in "remedial" students' scores on all three essay measures: Holistic, C&E, and D&F ($p < .01$ in all cases). In all three instances, the better scores are obtained for students in programs whose goals have been described as "laissez-faire," particularly when compared to students in programs with goals that focus upon remedial instruction. This most surprising finding led to much discussion by the research team. Based upon our interview data, we believe this reflects the tendency of the remedial goals we found explicated to focus upon discrete sentence and paragraph "skills" rather than "larger" and more integrated visions of the writing process.

Faculty Retraining. The positive effect of an active and aggressive faculty retraining effort on the holistic and C&E scores of composition students holds true when we separate the remedial students for closer examination ($p < .01$ in both cases).

Proportion of Tenured Faculty on Staff. Programs in departments with less than 75% tenured faculty seem to produce students (originally identified as remedial) who score significantly higher on all three measures of writing performance: Holistic, C&E, and D&F (for all three, $p < .01$).

Proportion of Part-Time Faculty Teaching Writing. While the holistic scores do not appear influenced by variations in this feature, both the C&E and the D&F scores show significant differences for "remedial" students. Where fewer than 25% of the instructors are part-timers, students score lower on both essay Feature scales ($p < .01$).

Campus Features that Relate to the Performance and Perceptions of "Remedial" Students

Campus Involvement in the Upper Division Requirement. Differences in campus-wide involvement in the certification of upper division students' writing skills (a system-wide requirement for graduation) turned out to be significant for all three essay measures ($p < .01$ for all three measures).

For all three measures, the better scores for remedial students are found on campuses where the English department does not seek but nevertheless has primary responsibility for setting and managing the certification process. Less positive scores appear in those settings where the English department has assumed some leadership role but where there is active campus-wide involvement in administration of the requirement.

Upper Division Writing Instruction. As was the case in our analyses with all students, where there is a department writing course available for upper division students, students in the freshman composition program demonstrate greater instructional gains than their peers on campuses with little or no such upper-division assistance available. This relationship appears on all three writing scales: Holistic, C&E, and D&F scores ($p < .01$ in all cases).

Certification Method for the Upper Division Writing Requirement. On campuses where the only certification method for the upper division writing requirement is an examination, "remedial" students in the freshman composition program score significantly lower on all three essay measures. For holistic scores this is in contrast to the option method which allows exam or course ($p = .03$); for C&E scores this is in contrast to course only ($p = .04$); and, for D&F scores this is in contrast to either of the two alternatives ($p = .01$). Thus, it seems that the effect is largely a positive one from the exam option, rather than any special decrement associated with the other two methods.

Ethnic Diversity in the Student Population. Differences in this variable appear to make a significant difference in holistic scores only (p = .01). Where ethnic minorities are least prominant, their scores are higher. We may speculate upon the "modeling" influence of Anglo students, upon differences in teachers' instruction where minorities are scarce, upon which individual ethnic minority students tend to select predominantly Anglo campuses.

Size. This variable refers to the undergraduate enrollment of each campus. In our sample, the moderate sized campuses (enrollment between ten and twenty thousand students) have freshman composition students with significantly higher scores on the holistic scale (p < .01) and the C&E scale (p < .01).

Writing Instruction Outside the English Department. "Remedial" students on campuses where there is specifically focused assistance in writing skills available outside the English department, students' C&E and D&F scores (p < .01 for both) were significantly higher than where the only outside assistance was available in a study skills center (no instruction specifically focused on writing).

Table 8.5

Summary Statistics for ANOVA's with "Remedial Students"[1]

Effects of Program and Campus Features on Holistic Scores

Program Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
Goals	21.61 (2)	6.42	.002
Fac Ret'g	52.20 (1)	15.55	.001
UDR Cert	11.78 (2)	3.48	.031
UDR Inst	18.51 (2)	5.49	.004
UDR Cam	49.73 (3)	14.97	.001

Mean Squares for Residual Term = 3.37
N = 1270

Campus Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
Tenured	53.65 (1)	21.62	.001
Size	24.14 (2)	6.85	.001
Ethnic Bal	16.15 (2)	4.57	.011

Mean Squares for Residual Term = 3.52
N = 2235

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[1] Remedial students are those with EPT total scores less than or equal to 150 or SAT verbal scores less than or equal to 380.

Table 8.6

Summary Statistics for ANOVA's with "Remedial Students"[1]

Effects of Program and Campus Features on **Correctness and Efficiency** (C&E) Scores

Program Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
Goals	32.93 (2)	14.75	.001
Pt Supv	20.41 (1)	9.00	.003
Fac Ret'g	21.68 (1)	9.57	.002
UDR Cert	7.26 (2)	3.19	.041
UDR Inst	14.16 (2)	6.26	.002
UDR Cam	32.80 (3)	14.69	.001
NonEngl	16.44 (2)	7.28	.001

Mean Squares for Residual Term = 2.27
N = 1272

Campus Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
Part Tm	11.79 (2)	4.90	.008
Tenured	47.11 (1)	19.68	.001
Size	12.56 (2)	5.23	.006

Mean Squares for Residual Term = 2.41
N = 2242

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[1] Remedial students are those with EPT total scores less than or equal to 150 or SAT verbal scores less than or equal to 380.

Table 8.7

Summary Statistics for ANOVA's with "Remedial Students"[1]

Effects of Program and Campus Features on

Development and Focus (D&F) Scores

Program Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
Goals	11.82 (2)	5.27	.005
UDR Cert	10.18 (2)	4.53	.011
UDR Inst	10.86 (2)	4.83	.008
UDR Cam	12.97 (3)	5.78	.003
NonEngl	8.86 (2)	3.94	.001

Mean Squares for Residual Term = 2.25
N = 1221

Campus Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
Part Tm	11.80 (2)	4.88	.008
Tenured	42.04 (1)	17.30	.001

Mean Squares for Residual Term = 2.43
N = 2143

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[1] Remedial students are those with EPT total scores less than or equal to 150 or SAT verbal scores less than or equal to 380.

Table 8.8

Summary Statistics for ANOVA's with "Remedial Students"[1]

Effects of Program and Campus Features on Self-Perception Factor Scores

A. General Cognitive Gains in Writing Skill

Program Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
Goals	9.79 (2)	3.00	.050
Rem Loc	9.70 (2)	2.97	.052
UDR Cert	25.28 (2)	7.80	.001
UDR Inst	19.21 (2)	5.91	.003
UDR Cam	17.00 (2)	5.22	.006

Mean Squares for Residual Term = 3.26
N = 1273

Campus Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
Ethnic Bal	20.43 (2)	6.37	.002
Tenured	22.16 (1)	6.85	.009

Mean Squares for Residual Term = 3.22
N = 2243

Table 8.8 continued

B. Gains in Understanding of the Revision Process

Program Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
Goals	5.69 (2)	9.13	.001
Rem Loc	2.96 (2)	4.71	.009
Rem Seq	1.73 (3)	2.75	.042
UDR Inst	2.68 (2)	4.27	.014
UDR Cam	2.64 (2)	4.20	.015

Mean Squares for Residual Term = .63
N = 1273

Campus Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
Ethnic Bal	2.89 (2)	4.59	.010

Mean Squares for Residual Term = .63
N = 2243

C. Increased Skill and Success in Revision

Program Features	Mean Square (df)	F-Ratio	Significance of F
Goals	1.96 (2)	3.37	.035

Mean Squares for Residual Term = .59
N = 1194

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[1] Remedial students are those with EPT total scores less than or equal to 150 or SAT verbal scores less than or equal to 380.

Results of Interview Analysis

This section describes the process and results of our analysis of interviews, augmented by Fact Sheet data. In winter of 1981, we interviewed 57 people on ten campuses. On each campus we spoke with the academic vice president, the dean of humanities (or arts), the English department chair, the composition program coordinator, and the director of the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP). In addition, on several campuses we found and interviewed remedial course coordinators, learning assistance center directors, upper division requirement coordinators, or directors of writing programs housed outside of the English department. These interviews were taped and the tapes later transcribed.

We divided the transcriptions into numbered sections (using an arbitrary but constant size rule based on turn-taking in the interview conversation). We asked each research panelist (five), all of whom had done interviewing, to code each numbered passage according to main conversational topics. The code scheme for possible topics was based upon the taxonomy of writing programs, modified through several training sessions in interview coding.

Each interview was coded by two raters. Interview passages and their set of two code numbers were entered into a computer data base. Frequency counts of code numbers indicated for which topics we had the most, and most diverse, information. In this way we identified eight topics for first priority analysis.

These topics were further reduced in number to five, by considering the results of our factor analysis of questionnaire data. We hoped in our first major reporting effort to provide a coherent and thorough discussion of major findings rather than a disjointed listing of data. Thus we settled upon the following five issues, each of which considers a slightly different level of issues and each of which has a corresponding questionnaire-based descriptive factor or factors.

Table

Interview Topics for Analysis

1. Composition program goals and instructional philosophies.
2. Composition program coordinator's activities and responsibilities.
3. Remedial instruction: procedures and resources.
4. The upper-division writing requirement: procedures and policies.
5. Non-English department composition activities, such as tutoring, EOP.

Our next step was to read through the coded sections of interviews for each topic. This time readers did not rate or code passages further. Instead they let the remarks of the interviewee suggest aspects of the topic area that should be noted. After all note taking activity had been completed for one topic area, readers met and discussed their notes and impressions. First, readers agreed upon a descriptor for the topic area and, then, aided by their notes and quotes from the transcriptions, the group worked out categories distinguishing campuses within that descriptor heading. Sometimes what had originally been one descriptor was broken down into two or more separate but related aspects of the original topic. Then within each new descriptor, categories were created. Sometimes a descriptor not only remained intact, but offered only two mutually exclusive categories.

Following agreement on the topical analysis of the interviews, we wrote up prose drafts explicating these analyses and offering quotations in support of analysis conclusions. These "vignettes" were circulated among the analysis group.

After some discussion, we decided to indicate in which categories campus programs had been placed for each descriptor. However, by doing so we do not mean to imply that these analyses are based upon and yield facts. They do not. They are perceptions and personal beliefs and their analysis yields impressions of how the world works on each campus. The utility of our analyses is to identify program patterns, not to compare individual campuses. In fact, as we began to discriminate groupings of campus programs we found that two of our ten campuses have additional fully developed writing programs outside the English department.

In these two non-English department programs, writing program directors coordinate the courses and instructors much the way their English department colleagues do. On campus J, a large suburban campus, two departments outside of English offer complete writing programs. These two departments, Chicano Studies and Pan-African Studies, each with its own composition coordinator, do not serve only minority ethnic group students, though that has been their primary responsibility. It is important to include these separate programs with their own identification, since they are legitimate programs and, incidentally, expand the usefulness of the research.

To identify multiple programs on a single campus, we agreed to treat these programs separately from the English department operations. The "B" notation denotes the non-English department programs. This distinction is used only for complete, discrete writing programs, programs with a sequence of courses comparable to those we might find in an English department. Departments that simply offer a functionally equivalent course, i.e., accepted in lieu of an English department course, have not been considered as providing separate writing programs. This definition and identification of Q(B) and J(B) holds true for these campuses on other topics in our interview analysis, and we continue referring to the different programs using these notations in our discussions below.

1. Composition Program Goals and Instructional Philosophies

One of the most frequently used code categories for the interviews describes the goals and underlying philosophy of the composition program. We specifically asked this of composition program coordinators, but references to program goals and philosophy also surfaced in interviews with remedial coordinators, English chairs, learning center directors, EOP directors, deans, and academic vice presidents.

Reviewing our notes on these coded passages, we further refined our category definition. We agreed that what we wanted to know was not the personal philosophy or private goals of the composition program coordinator. Rather, we sought indications of a programmatic response. This, we expected, would be identifiable as (1) systematic and unified in nature; (2) specified in writing, either as a handbook, or guideline, or common or sample syllabus; and (3) reportedly widely embraced or generally adhered to by composition instructors. After much discussion of notes and presentation of interview passages as "evidence," we agreed that programs that we could identify between programs that do meet these criteria (systematic, specified, widely embraced) and those that do not. However, our interview data suggested that a further delineation was necessary. Some programs do include such unifying features as curriculum guidelines, course descriptions, handbooks, sample syllabuses. While many of these same programs include statements of expected outcomes, i.e., goals, others cover only instructional approaches, i.e., "philosophy." There is an additional complication in defining both goals and philosophies: for some programs this information applies only to the freshman composition course(s); for others, just the remedial coursework; for still others, both regular and remedial instruction are covered.

a. Laissez-faire. A meaningful distinguishing characteristic among programs with goals statements is the "seriousness" with which these statements are taken. To a large extent, this distinction reflects our original criterion, "widely embraced" goals and philosophy. While all composition coordinators interviewed report the existence of guidelines or course descriptions, some admit they haven't seen a copy in years, while others produced for our interviewer hundred-page documents and described instructor training. Thus, at one extreme we could label as "laissez faire" campus programs where course guidelines are "available" if someone asks, but where there isn't an active attempt to ensure widespread adoption of these guidelines. Also distinguishing the "laissez faire" programs is the absence of a specific goals statement. While guidelines or sample syllabuses provide instructional recommendations, they do not specify the skills or knowledge students are expected to acquire through this instruction. In short, these programs have a limited "programmatic" nature and leave a good deal of their domain uncharted.

The three programs we identify as "laissez-faire" are campuses F, H, and I. Programs F and H are large, urban campuses known for their extensive use of part-time instructors (50% of the department staff). Program I is a mid-sized polytechnical school located in a suburban, almost rural, community. To demonstrate our laissez-faire definition and our decision to label programs F, H, and I as such, we offer the following exchanges between the interviewer (INT) and the composition program directors (COMP).

PROGRAM F

INT: Is there anything like an underlying philosophy, a set of goals for the composition program?

COMP: In this university?

INT: In this department.

COMP: Universally held, probably not. I think the diversity of the 100 sections, it's hard to--there is, in our statement about what the course, that it's a course in expository writing, if that's a philosophy. I guess it can be answered in two different ways: Among the 100 plus sections, no, in theory, yes. There is our statement which says clearly it's a course in expository writing not in literary analysis. That students will write. But it can't be taken for granted that in every section they write... the papers will be responded to and students will have an opportunity to respond to the response, to write to show that they have learned. The writing is--what we're trying to impress on everbody is that this is a writing process.

INT: Do you get into matters of particular approaches to rhetoric, anything of that sort, the pre-writing, revision process idea?

COMP: Certainly the most coherent theory probably exists among the TAs because they've all been following through my class. The first words on the board are writing is a process, writing is discovery. And for their sections, I think they all know that. They're good people. They're really splendid. And I think writing is a process in their class. And it is responded to and worked on again and in many of the part-timers, that's true, for maybe a third of them. The faculty, I don't know really what happens in faculty sections. I never see their evaluations. I've been in one faculty member's writing class on his request. I hear rumors from some others, but I don't really know what happens.

INT: There are no syllabuses for the comp. classes?

COMP: Individual course loads--nothing resembling a departmental syllabus.

INT: Just ones the individuals prepare for themselves?

COMP: Right.

PROGRAM I

INT: Is there anything like an underlying philosophy or set of goals for the comp. program?

COMP: There probably is.

INT: Do you have copies of the objectives of those...?

COMP: Yes.

INT: Do you try in the comp. committee to make explicit and articulate some philosophy?

COMP: I think not....although we collect textbooks. We put together a list of textbooks in this department. That probably does more in controlling what actually goes on in the classrooms.

INT: How well do you feel you know what goes on in composition classes?

COMP: I don't know much about what goes on in all composition classes, but I know more about what goes on in the comp. classrooms, the sections, taught by our part-timers, because at the end of the quarter I ask them to hand in to me a copy of their syllabus and the essay finals and they come and talk to me.

INT: Do you have impressions on what's going on, say, in the full-time faculty classrooms?

COMP: Yes. I have impressions--I don't know how accurate they are. They are based on either what they tell me they are doing and I am also very suspicious when someone comes up and starts sort of boasting....the department chair might be able to help you more.

PROGRAM H

INT: Do you see anything like an underlying philosophy or goals for the comp. program?

COMP: I hope that one is emerging and that is, I think, basically what the composition committee has been directing itself to this fall. The history of the composition program here is that we used to be a department of literature that taught some composition and I think now it would be more accurate to say we are a department of composition that teaches some literature. Certainly that's true in terms of our FTE [full-time equivalent student enrollment].

INT: Does the department have any kind of, while you're putting together those goals statements, any other kind of guideline for people teaching comp.?

COMP: No, there hasn't been. The only guidelines that have existed have been rather general and perfunctory descriptions of the courses that

> appear in the university catalog. But I suspect that most faculty members have not even looked at those.

In sum, these three programs neither pursue a unified program of instruction nor do they have mechanisms for doing so. Their instructional approaches are described in a limited manner, by a catalog course description or recommended texts, and no one is expected to pay them very much attention. Further, the composition coordinators do not explicate or disseminate a goals statement for composition courses. In all three cases, the composition coordinators suggest that attempts to generate a greater "programmatic" approach would meet with a great deal of opposition, particularly from regular tenure-track and tenured faculty.

The balance of our interview campuses have more actively and successfully established a structured program of instruction. Nevertheless, we find a distinguishing factor divides these more organized programs into two types. This characteristic might best be called "scope" or "breadth" of program goals and philosophy statements. The distinction describes the degree of planned articulation among courses, particularly between remedial and regular composition. Six of the remaining nine program coordinators describe an instructional philosophy for remedial and regular instruction. For three other programs, instructional philosophies articulated by their coordinators apply only to remedial coursework. All nine of these program coordinators explained their program's intended outcomes for students, though again for three programs the goals are restricted to remedial students.

b. Remedial Only. The three composition programs where goals and instructional philosophies are restricted to remedial courses are J(A), E, and C. J(A) is on a large, suburban campus, E is on a large, urban campus, and program C is on a polytechnic campus in a largely rural setting. The first common feature among these programs is the apparent disinterest in establishing program goals or an instructional philosophy for freshman composition. Instead, attention is devoted to remedial courses. Queried about their regular freshman composition instruction, these program coordinators sound very much like their "laissez-faire" colleagues.

PROGRAM J(A)

> INT: And in the 155 [freshman comp.] in your course description, do you include something like a description of the standards you expect students to meet in order to pass that course?
>
> COMP: No, we don't. Probably should, but we don't. Our department is so individualistic, that they have a hard time agreeing and feeling that someone else is going to impose what they are going to do. That is why we could not get the holistic grading for the upper division requirement.
>
> INT: Do you feel you would like greater uniformity in the structure of the program?
>
> COMP: Composition is very hard to teach for the [literature specialist]. And the need to have changes and variety and experiment with things--I would hate to have enough conformity that it would not allow, really, experimentation.

PROGRAM E

INT: Is there anything like an underlying philosophy or set of goals for the composition program? Is it written down somewhere? Can I get a copy?

COMP: Of our philosophy? No, we don't have our philosophy written down anywhere. The theory is that we make students into better writers. ...The English composition committee has good drafts and very, very loose guidelines for 114 (freshman comp.)...and distributes them to the department at large. ...But they are so general--not to mean a great deal.

INT: I would not mind getting it.

COMP: Yes, but otherwise, there is no need to because there are going to be some people that are trained in a particular way--you don't want to give them any further guidelines.

INT: Are there uniform exams, grades, or other standards in dealing with the course--the freshman course for instance?

COMP: No.

INT: Do you feel that you would like greater uniformity in the structure of the program?

COMP: I wish that we could have a, more of an effect on what the full-time faculty are doing. Outside of that, no.

None of these campuses has a particularly well coordinated program of instruction for regular composition classes. However, while program J(A) is not actively pursuing establishment of freshman composition program features, E and C show some movement toward structure. Unfortunately, as with most programs, their composition coordinators exercise their authority chiefly in respect to part-time lecturers and teaching assistants. Accordingly, in these two programs a higher degree of commonality exists among composition sections taught by these staff members than among those covered by full-time, regular faculty. (This part-timer/ full-timer distinction is covered in greater detail under the composition coordinator category described later.)

Nevertheless, the remedial coursework for programs J(A), E, and C is much more highly specified than is the regular composition coursework. In fact, two of these three programs (except E) have a separate remedial program coordinator in addition to their composition coordinator. Program E's composition coordinator reports a uniform midterm in all remedial classes, a single common textbook, a required training course for instructors, sequential curriculum, and specific expectations for students. Campus program J(A)'s remedial coordinator tells of common midterm and final exams, a course guideline, a common text, and agreement on methods. The remedial coordinator for program C describes, with the exception of common exams, a similar degree of specificity and commonality. For all three of the programs, the coordinators make it clear that a large part of their success in establishing common goals and philosophy is due to the fact that remedial instructors are almost exclusively part-timers or teaching assistants (graduate students).

These differences in the amount of focus and control between the regular freshman composition courses and remedial instruction are remarkably distinctive. Compare, for example, program E coordinator's remarks about remedial coursework (below) with his remarks about composition (just above).

PROGRAM E

INT: Is there any philosophy or set of goals or is it the same ones for the regular program?

COMP: Well, yes. There is a very specific set of goals for English 104 [remedial]. At the end of the first half of the semester we want the students to be able to proof read their own writing accurately. The theory behind that is these very, very inexperienced writers literally do not see what they have written. They see only what they meant to write. And so we...(on for 1-1/2 single-spaced pages).

INT: These are taught by part-timers?

COMP: Yes, exclusively.

INT: Then you know what goes on in the course?

COMP: Yes.

INT: And you have a pretty tight syllabus for that class, section by section?

COMP: Yes.

INT: Do you have uniform exams?

COMP: We have a uniform midterm, but not final.

INT: Do you feel that is adequate uniformity?

COMP: Yes. ...they have gone through the training course and they are either MA candidates or people who have completed their MA's in either literature or creative writing.

In sum, while these programs do seem to succeed in establishing and maintaining a set of instructional goals and theory for remedial instruction, these same programs are less concerned about their coordination of regular freshman composition classes. Although each composition coordinator makes it clear that he or she has little knowledge of or power of persuasion over full-time instructors, this in and of itself cannot explain the lack of a programmatic structure in the composition coursework. The six other programs in our interview sample share the same staffing characteristics, yet each manages to present a program of goals and instructional theory guiding both freshman and remedial composition.

c. Remedial and Regular Composition. Interviews gathered on the six remaining writing programs suggest that specific goals and philosophical or theoretical approaches underlie writing coursework, and that these programmatic features provide for some measure of cohesion among instructors in both remedial and regular freshman composition. The six programs are J(B), D, Q(A), Q(B), S and G. Perhaps it is no coincidence that four of these six programs are found on smaller, suburban campuses: Q(A), Q(B), S and G. The fifth campus program J(B), although housed on a large suburban campus, actually refers to two programs each in a small department outside English (Chicano Studies, Pan-African Studies). The campus D program is the only one found in the English department of a large, urban campus.

Program D has divided control of its writing program between the English department composition coordinator and the Writing Lab director who is the remedial coordinator.

All remedial assistance is provided in the English department lab, either as workshop or regular coursework. Nevertheless, both coordinators articulate clear goals for their students and specific strategies upon which instruction is based. Further, both interviews suggest an active interrelationship between lab and department courses, and personnel. (In the excerpts below, REML stands for remedial coordinator.)

PROGRAM D

> INT: How well do you feel you know what goes on in composition classes? How about full-time, part-time and TAs; do you have an idea what happens within the classes?
>
> COMP: Fairly well. More than I would have thought possible. The [common] final exam allows a great deal of that to occur. The common final exam, not just for being able to go back over and work with the statistics and the calculator, but the committee work that comes prior to that, working with people and setting up the topics, talking about the theory of composition. They bring in topics, possible topics. You learn something about it; you make comments and make an effect on people and vice versa, "you can't make students write on that." Also, the reading sessions, where you spend a whole day with all your comp. staff, at every level, and they're talking about composition. That's the focus and prior to that, everybody went his own separate way and you never really--you really didn't know what was going on....

> INT: Is there any underlying philosophy for the remedial program?
>
> REML: I think so. I think we try to come at them in two different directions. One, we build sentences in a positive skill performance. Sentence building sequence that does not emphasize errors. We emphasize writing performance in building up

skills by patterning practice and things like that. At the other end of the scale, we try to give them large volumes of writing. Free writing journals, daily writing, open discussion. Very little evaluation. So they have got freedom in the Composition component with a lot of journal writing and open-ended assignments. And the discipline in the sentence level. Now, I think those two--they are balancing factors. We try to maximize the discipline in the sentence part of it. Anyway that is what I try to instill in the teachers. Writing should be a joy. Sometimes it is a laborious joy.

INT: How well do you know what goes on in the remedial sections.

REML: I visit. I talk. I know the teachers personally.

INT: Do you furnish syllabi or syllabuses for the remedial classes?

REML: I have guidelines specifying the number of assignments, the kinds of assignments, the lab work, word volume. And my composition book is used in about half the classes. So that is another kind of influence.

INT: But nobody has to use the textbook? They can choose their own textbooks?

REML: They all have to use the lab textbook for the lab part of it. So the lab text is uniform. They all have to use the lab textbook.

INT: And then they can use other text.

REML: Oh, sure. There is a wide variety. Some use short stories and very little text. And some people use a handbook. There are all different kinds of approaches.

INT: They follow the guidelines though.

REML: They all follow the guidelines, right.

INT: You have got a uniform final. Would you like greater uniformity in the remedial program or are you satisfied with it?

> REML: No. I think we are the right--we have tried to strike the right balance between the consensus and agreement and individual styles and methods.

The J(B) programs reside in the two ethnic studies departments (Chicano, Pan-African). In both cases the writing program is small, run by one person, and staffed primarily by part-timers or non-tenure track full-time lecturers. This may account for the control the writing coordinators exert in specifying instructional goals and approaches.

PROGRAM J(B)

COMP #1

> INT: Would you say that there is anything like an underlying philosophy or set of goals for this total composition program?
>
> COMP #1: Yes, we have, of course, the whole notion of students developing facility in the use of the language, both written and oral, of college level proficiency such as what would be an accomplishment equal to any other college level proficiency. So, therefore, we teach them how to read and how to interpret what they read and how to think critically and clearly, and to express your ideas in writing. The main goal is to see, of course, that students can do that and do it to the best of their ability and at a level that is [at least the] minimum for any college student.
>
> INT: Is this written down somewhere--what you've just described?
>
> COMP #1: Yes.
>
> INT: ...do you feel you know what goes on in the composition classes?

COMP #1: Reasonably well. We have staff meetings and we have a small enough staff that we can talk to each other very frankly about what is going on.

INT: And you mentioned--did you use syllabuses?

COMP #1: Yes.

INT: The faculty follow these syllabuses pretty regularly?

COMP #1: Yes. They are supposed to and I think that they do. ...Yes and we all use the same text. ...The main thing that I have initiated in the staff development sessions is that writing should be viewed as a process. Students do their papers, the teacher reads them, grades them and makes comments and then they are asked and required to revise them.

INT: And there are in fact uniform exams and standard in these courses?

COMP #1: Yes. We have our departmental essay.

INT: In both the developmental (remedial) and the 150 courses (comp.)?

COMP #1: Right.

INT: But is it true that--the fact that the members of the staff that participate jointly in this kind of enterprise--that a set of common standards pretty much evolved pragmatically?

COMP #1: That is right exactly. I think it is true that we have a set of standards. We do have standards written out...used in determining what level a student falls into. For example, we have a standard for C or B. ...But I think we have a healthy uniformity and we allow for diversity within it. I think you ought to allow instructors to exercise some options.

PROGRAM J(B)

COMP #2

INT: Is there anything like an underlying philosophy or set of goals for this composition program?

COMP #2: Depends on the course. I think the remedial courses we are just simply trying to get those people to read and write at what we think is college level writing--to be able to take the regular freshman course with some degree of success. See, our students are sometimes recent immigrants. So they really need an ESL approach. Others are second generation, third generation--we really get a mixture...We try to tailor-make it. And it is very hard to have an underlying philosophy for that. Now by the time they get to freshman English we hope that they are all, that is the regular university requirement, we hope that they are all at least at the writing level that would pass the [systemwide] English Placement Test with a score of at least 145 or better.

INT: Do you have information about goals or objectives in the program written down any place?

COMP #2: Yes.

INT: Do you feel that you have a pretty good idea of what is going on in the composition classes in the department?

COMP #2: Yes. We are small enough--we are only about five instructors--that it is not difficult to keep tabs on what is going on.

INT: Do you have syllabuses for your comp. classes?

COMP #2: We have standardized textbooks that we will use in each class. We have a general course outline but it is--I would not call it a syllabus, because each instructor is allowed quite a bit of freedom.

INT: And your sense is that the faculty follows these guidelines?

COMP #2: Yes. We keep track of that too, through the meetings we have - the writing committee meetings and the little training workshops that we have on Saturdays once in a while.

INT: Who chooses the textbooks? The committee as a whole?

COMP #2: As a group. We had pretty much decided on the same grammar book. We use different reading

> anthologies but we have agreed that we will all use an anthology rather than to bring in a bunch of miscellaneous articles.
>
> INT: Even informally, have you a kind of consensus in the department in the writing program about what students are expected to know...?
>
> COMP #2: ...And the 50% of the final that is not the holistic writing is on the grammar book. So now, we know that they have covered the seven chapters in grammar, the paragraph, the term paper. And they have had the essay so they get the gestalt of the whole thing.
>
> INT: There is considerable uniformity.
>
> COMP #2: Oh, yes...I like it the way it is.

In sum, these six programs exhibit a higher degree of direction. They have goals and specific instructional orientations. These are not simply paper structures; common exams, extensive guidelines, required texts, and training sessions, all contribute toward the faithful implementation of program goals and philosophies articulated by the interviewees. Further, these qualities exist for regular and remedial writing coursework.

2. Composition Program Coordinator's Activities and Responsibilities

This category, as used in interview coding, included reports of the responsibilities and activities of composition coordinators. Early in the development of the interview protocols we realized there might be a difference between program responsibilities undertaken voluntarily and those responsibilities that are traditionally part of the job description. We decided to gather information on both but to try to distinguish between them. Several of the campus programs in our interview sample do in fact have dynamic hard-working individuals who have assumed responsibilities beyond the call of duty. For this reason we maintain this concept in our descriptions of composition program coordinators in this report.

a. Remedial Too. The easiest distinguishing characteristic to identify is whether or not the composition coordinator is also responsible for remedial writing instruction. Five composition coordinators in our interview sample of twelve do oversee remedial writing instruction. These five are coordinators of programs E, J(B), Q(A), Q(B), and S.

Two of these five are the non-English department programs, J(B) and Q(B), and are small in size. It is not surprising then that their composition coordinators manage all aspects of the writing course offerings.

Programs E, Q(A), and S, though seemingly large enough to divide responsibilities between composition and remedial coordinators, do not do so. The Q(A) program, interestingly, has recently enlarged its remedial offering (see description in section on Remedial Instruction). This effort has largely been promoted by the English department chair. In fact, the operations of the Q(A) program are distinguished by the degree of involvement and interest on the part of the department chair (ENGL).

PROGRAM Q(A)

> INT: [Composition Coordinator] talked about the way the comp. chair and the department chair work together presently, with the two of you occupying the positions. What's your perception of the way the department chair and comp. chair should operate?
>
> ENGL: I'm trying to maintain a very delicate balance between being supportive and helpful on the one hand and trying not to meddle on the other.
>
> INT: Now as far as policies in the pamphlet are concerned--the books, the goals and objectives of the courses--do you feel that you, as chair, have any part in administering those? That is, seeing to it that those matters of department policy are carried out in classes?
>
> ENGL: Yes. I would feel that if, for example, we were having problems with someone who is perhaps abusing or refusing to follow the guidelines, I would feel very comfortable about talking to that person. [Composition Coordinator] would get the first and primary responsibility but I certainly would support him fully and if that means talking to the person, I would do it.

In addition to the involvement of the English chair, the Q(A) composition coordinator shares responsibilities with the composition committee. Asked about the development of the decision to expand the two-unit remedial adjunct to a full-fledged four-unit course, the composition chair replies that it "was a recommendation of the composition committee to the department as a whole." Throughout both Q(A) department chair and composition coordinator interviews there are extensive references to the role of the composition committee in initiating and affecting policy changes. As the composition coordinator says, "So far as I know, all topics that bear directly on the composition program come to my committee. They're discussed there."

The other two programs in this category (joint responsibility for regular and remedial composition) are similar to each other but quite different from the Q(A) program. For these two, E and S, remedial instruction responsibilities have been undertaken by the composition coordinator by choice, with little assistance from others in the department, either chair or committee members. These coordinators are examples of the dynamic leader whose extensive workload is largely the result of personal choice. The courses these two are responsible for are largely staffed by part-timers and graduate TAs. This factor may contribute to the clarity of purpose and the cohesiveness established among the writing instructors.

PROGRAM S

> COMP: My main responsibilities are training the part-time composition people, who get more numerous every quarter; keeping up some kind of communication among all the people who teach composition on all levels. That audience changes every quarter. And I try to get them together to discuss methods, textbooks, writing assignments--that sort of thing.
>
> INT: Are any of those pet projects? Part of the job or becoming part of the job?
>
> COMP: They are becoming part of the job. We just scheduled a composition retreat, for example--one of them in the mountains--just for people who are solely responsible for teaching composition--part

> and full time. That's all they do. And the retreat was wonderful; we talked about things from policy decisions all the way to methods. I always chose remedial courses first [to teach] and developed the remedial program from nothing--without any title of any sort--when I first got into the department. We had a single course that was supposed to serve all of the purposes of the various remedial students. And now we have three [courses]...

PROGRAM E

> INT: Are there any particular ideas or pet projects to which you've devoted a lot of time?
>
> COMP: The comp. program, the remedial course, a job had to be done from scratch, the remedial course had to be done from scratch, the teaching writing courses from scratch, the hiring procedure from scratch, the part-time instructors....
>
> INT: Who really has the clout for composition decisions for campuswide policies?
>
> COMP: It covers a lot of territory. For most day-to-day and basic policy matters, I really have the clout. And for campus-wide policies on writing... there is the university literacy committee....

The program E coordinator also runs the training course required of all instructors (regular or contract) before they may teach writing courses.

These two program coordinators have both stepped into a vacuum in leadership and interest in composition and have taken on the tasks of revising the remedial program, of seeking continuity and quality in part-timers' instruction, and of retraining faculty (though both admit difficulties in getting meaningful participation from tenured faculty).

In short, in this category describing composition coordinator whose responsibilities include regular and remedial writing program administration, we find a variety of situations lead to the same end. Two programs, Q(B) and J(B), include remedial responsibilities in their comp. coordinator's role because the size of the department writing program is very small, manageable by one person. The third program coordinator, for Q(A), shares his load with a very active department chair and composition committee. The fourth and fifth composition program coordinators, on campuses E and S, choose to take on the remedial responsibilities as part of their job.

The remaining seven program coordinators we interviewed do not include remedial programs in their description of responsibilities and activities. Each of these programs does in fact have a separate titular head of remediation, i.e., a remedial program coordinator.

Our interviews uncovered a wide range of activities that are carried out by all or nearly all twelve program coordinators. The first of these common activities is chairing the composition committee in the department. Not surprisingly, then, the second common involvement is in the development of policies and procedures for the composition program, often done in conjunction with the composition committee. Other activities and responsibilities follow.

b. Supervision of Part-timers. Almost all our program coordinators claimed responsibility for the "training" and evaluation, however cursory, of their part-time instructors. For the most part, these program coordinators participate in hiring decisions too, either as committee members or by direct responsibility for that task. Here are typical descriptions:

PROGRAM E

INT: You participate primarily in selecting the part-time faculty?

COMP: Yes, it's done by the English composition committee. I'm chair of that committee and I have one vote. The new instructors have to take an in-service course during the first semester of teaching. I don't have to monitor what goes on in the part-time instructors' classes. I found out a long time ago, years ago, when I was really worried about it. They are homogeneously trained. And their hiring process is so meticulous and thorough that anybody who survives it is automatically guaranteed to be compulsive.

PROGRAM S

INT: What about hiring staff?

COMP: [English department chair] and I both interview for the hiring of part-time staff.

INT: Can you say why...you are directing a program and you don't really know very much of what people are doing and you say you are comfortable?

COMP: Yes. We know that we have trained them. We know that we have exchange sessions constantly on methods. We have policy meetings where I have contact with them. And the ultimate proof of

> their success...lies with the student evaluation... We read those comments with a fine tooth comb for evaluating.
>
> INT: Since the department has adopted these [goals] official policies--And the part-time instructors see these, I take it, and talk with you about them when they're hired?
>
> COMP: That is part of their training which I do as they are hired--one on one.

PROGRAM C

> INT: What are your main responsibilities?
>
> COMP: I have tried to put in place training TAs, TA courses, try to stay in constant touch with the TAs. Part-timers...I have implemented a system [so that] nobody can be placed on a priority [hiring] list without my consent.
>
> INT: Your part-timers and TAs only--do you know pretty much what goes on in the classroom?
>
> COMP: I think I do. I will visit a class where somebody feels it is a problem. But we have full-timers evaluating the part-timers once a year. And each part-timer or TA is evaluated by two full-timers.

There are only two programs whose coordinators are exceptions to this common involvement of composition coordinators in hiring, monitoring, and evaluating part-timers and TAs: programs D and H. In both these writing programs, composition coordinators are excluded from the hiring process, which occurs through a specific departmental personnel committee. For program D, monitoring and evaluation of the part-timers and TAs has been passed to the remedial coordinator, primarily in an attempt to reduce the composition coordinator's workload. For program H, the remedial coordinator has major responsibility for part-time and TA staff and yet is excluded from the hiring committee. Both D and H remedial coordinators also direct the departmental writing lab where remedial coursework and tutoring occur.

c. Faculty Retraining. Those working in the world of college composition programs use the term, "faculty development" or "retraining," to refer to an entire range of activities whose goal is to help ease the transition for the literature-trained faculty who must now function as writing class instructors. These activities can be as marginal as circulating a research article or as vigorous as a complete graduate course in composition theory.

For the most part, all our interviewees describe the reluctance and even adamant refusal of regular tenured and tenure-track faculty to take on lower division writing class instruction. Composition program coordinators, then, find themselves in a position to "ease" this situation and, perhaps, to upgrade instructional quality by offering faculty programs and seminars, thus in part retraining literature faculty for their new role. Ironically, because of the recent burgeoning interest in writing instruction as a legitimate field of study, many part-time instructors who are new graduates are often much better informed about writing theory and even trained in teaching writing. This disparity in training and interest can further strain the relationship between regular faculty and the writing program in which they must participate.

In our interview protocols we included questions and probes to explore the role of the composition coordinator in dealing with "retraining" literature faculty. (We have already described composition coordinators' inability to exert as much control over regular faculty's classroom instruction as they do over part-timers' work.) We found composition coordinators either shoulder this retraining responsibility and generate suitable activities or they do not. Those that do, vary in the extent and success of their efforts and in the support they receive from other administrators. (Some of the retraining activities are directed toward filling the instructor pool for the upper-division writing requirement courses. That issue is not included in this section.)

Composition coordinators who take an active role in retraining faculty can be found leading programs E, Q(B), I, and J(B). The program E coordinator has developed and teaches a course on teaching writing. It is a graduate level course and faculty members must complete this course before they are allowed to teach composition. The Q(B) program also relies upon a course to retrain faculty. However, this is predominantly for non-English department faculty who are teaching in the Q(B) writing program located in a small interdisciplinary department. The I and J(B) program coordinators are similar in their approach, which is considerably less formal than teaching courses. These program directors run loosely organized social gatherings in which composition is the formal topic for discussion. Some of the other composition coordinators interviewed also make opportunities to discuss composition "available," but the lack of sustained effort and success in drawing tenured faculty into these activities precludes our labeling these coordinators as effective leaders in faculty retraining. Compare the descriptions of effort and success on the part of the I and J(B) coordinators with those less successful efforts of the J(A) and S coordinators.

PROGRAM I

INT: Are you involved in any way in faculty retraining programs?

ENGL: We have an informal luncheon meeting called Comp. Meetings held perhaps once every six weeks in which we as a faculty are to read an article and discuss it. Or have an individual faculty member come and discuss an article on which he may be working, on composition--or which he has read and wishes to use as a focal point for an hour, an hour and a half discussion. In that sense, refining faculty understanding of the composition field.

INT: Are those well attended?

ENGL: I'd say we have perhaps eight to ten faculty. Often the people who attend the meeting and are most interested, are also, of course, those who know the most about it, and those who need it the most are nowhere to be seen.

INT: Are these eight to ten mostly part-timers?

ENGL: Half and half, I would say. ...They're really better attended at first and it really depends on how the person who's got the energy to do the paper work and recruiting--(the comp. and remedial coordinators).

PROGRAM J(B)

COMP #2

INT: What about faculty retraining? Do you get involved in that?

COMP #2: We have workshops in the writing committee occasionally where we decide to update each other on what we are doing, interesting things we have read. It is usually a Saturday workshop or something in someone's home. And it is casual and we have pie and coffee. But sometimes some very few good suggestions come out of that. Everyone brings his or her favorite essay or project or whatever. We exchange a lot of ideas.

. . . .

It would be very hard to structure them because all of this is taking place for free--on a Saturday or a Sunday. So quite often they are at my house and I provide a little dinner party or some hors d'oeuvres or something. How are you going to get people there otherwise? You can't pay them. You have no honorary liquor license. You have to have some sort of a carrot. And that is why they are so--

INT: Do they respond to this carrot?

COMP #2: Most of them show up.

PROGRAM J(A)

INT: Are there any structured occasions for full-time faculty and others to come together to share ideas on teaching?

COMP: Yes. We have occasionally had, and would like to have now, some kind of seminars or get-togethers...we will try to have one or two a semester. We don't always.

INT: What kind of response do you get from the faculty?

COMP: Not strong.

PROGRAM S

INT: And I take it you have the principal responsibility for faculty retraining?

COMP: That's right. ...We have had none of it go on so far. I set up a composition library in our staff room. ...There's been a low check out rate so far--but they are looking at the books. Some of them will just stand there and read something and put it back on the shelf.

INT: You've just been talking about this--structured occasions for full-time faculty and others to come together (grading sessions). And is it correct to say that what you've been saying is that the part-timers are very ready to do that and it's kind of tough to get the others to join?

COMP: That's pretty accurate. And the others, they take the time to say I'd really like to come to that and I can't. And I think part of it is that conflict in their souls between composition and literature. They say, 'Look, I'm going to give just so much time a week to composition. I believe in it--teaching is an important thing, but I'm not going to that discussion session. It's too much of my time.' So it's a really interesting paradox and yet the interest is there. Oh they'd love to know in two seconds what happened at that discussion session. But they don't want to take that hour and a half.

In sum, eight of the twelve composition coordinators in our interview sample are largely unable or unwilling to take active responsibility for the retraining or "development" of writing instructors within the department. Of those four who attempt to do so, only two clearly succeed. All of our interviewees describe the difficulties they encounter in getting regular tenured and tenure-track English faculty to participate. This is despite the sense that these literature-trained instructors are the very ones most in need of "catching up" on the developments in writing theory. Those coordinators whose retraining efforts do look successful have used one of two approaches: (1) mandatory, enforced coursework before assignment to teach writing, or (2) socially contexted "meetings" for which composition topics and materials are prepared ahead.

3. Remedial Instruction: Procedures and Resources

Certain baseline features of all remedial programs in The California State University system should be considered when reviewing these data. A major concern for all campuses is the use of remedial augmentation funds which are made available through the system headquarters on the basis of the number of students who score at or below 150 on the EPT on each campus. (The EPT has a range of 120 to 160, standard deviation of 9; a score of 150 is approximately at the 50th percentile.) The formula which generates this funding is based upon a theoretic reduction in the student/faculty ratio in remedial classes from 18:1 to 12:1. In practice, however, the campuses have a great deal of leeway in the exact remediation schemes using these funds. This is at least partially a result of the fact that the central remedial

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fund only takes care of, at most, half of the funding needs; the campuses must also use other course and administrative monies to establish remedial courses. The result is that the simplest solution to the remedial problem, namely tutorial adjuncts to freshman composition classes, is a part of many campus programs, but there are also substantial variations on the basic funding scheme.

Another consideration in most remedial programs is the use of reading classes for students at very low skill levels (EPT Reading sub-score less than 135). All the campuses interviewed had reading classes available or planned for implementation in the next academic year. Reading skills work is occasionally integrated into pre-remedial writing courses, but for the most part is separated from writing coursework, at least in the instructional sense.

The original intention of the faculty panel was to gather information on the mechanical details of remediation processes. Features such as sources and allocations of funds, hiring status of instructors, location of administrative responsibility for remedial programs, processes for diagnosing and placing remedial students, course sequencing, and enforcement of requirements, could all be reasonably associated with this category. Thus, a number of decisions were necessary to narrow the focus of the topic for this analysis. First and foremost, only the lower division remedial program is included. Some courses related to the upper-division writing competency requirement for graduation might also be considered "remedial." The content of such courses, however, is collegiate in nature and is often so closely tied to the implementation of the requirement that the details of such remediation are better dealt with in the upper-division requirement category.

Other components of remedial procedures which are not included in this area are processes for diagnosing and placing remedial students and enforcement policies. (Both of these areas are in a separate category not included in this report: English Placement Test procedures and policies.) An additional area which has not been dealt with here is sources and allocations of funds.

There remain under our general heading three sources of variation: location of administrative responsibility for remedial programs, course sequencing, and hiring status of instructors. These sources of variation are labeled and described below.

a. Remedial Program Location. The first of three arrangements for remedial responsibility is basically a non-arrangement; i.e., the campus has no remedial coordinator and remedial coursework in writing is available outside the English department. Campus program F is the only member of this class. Primary arrangements for remediation are made through the Study Skills Center, which offers cataloged courses. Study Skills Center staff deal with remedial composition instruction as a part of their broader responsibilities for assistance in a number of subject areas.

The second type of arrangement places the remedial program within the English department, but the department does not have a remedial chair. Responsibility for remediation usually lies with the composition chair. Five programs make use of this arrangement; they are E, J(B), Q(A), Q(B), and S.

The remaining six remedial programs in our sample are located within the English department, and the department has a remedial chair or coordinator who is responsible for program administration. In five of the programs in this class, the remedial coordinator is responsible for a subset of the overall English department curriculum. Programs C, D, G, H, I, and J(A) are all of this type. Program D is an extreme variation of this form. The English department has acquired and manages a large-scale learning center whose sole function is remediation in reading and composition skills. Within the English department both the director of this learning center and the remedial composition director are responsible for administration.

b. Course Sequencing. The course sequence available on some campuses to remedial students is quite detailed, offering a multiplicity of course objectives, remediation levels, and teaching techniques. After some consideration of the critical features of these programs, however, we settled upon four broad classifications: (a) adjunct assistance only, (b) one remedial course, (c) pre-remedial and remedial coursework, and (d) pre-remedial coursework and remedial adjunct assistance.

Adjunct Assistance Only. One English department, F, program offers remedial instruction only through course adjunct assistance. In this case that consists solely of tutors attached to certain sections of the regular freshman composition course for students who possess skills at the upper levels of the remedial range. Otherwise students must initiate their own remediation in writing by seeking learning center assistance. Comments from a learning center staff member (LC STAFF) and from the English department chair illustrate the extent of remediation available from the English department.

PROGRAM F

> LC STAFF: Well, one of our budgetary items is, I forget whether it is $10,000 or $12,000 this year, I believe $12,000, is that we give over to the English department to supply them with tutors for some of their more remedial writing students. ...So there is a physical connection. Those are monies that come from the Chancellor's writing development funds which are apportioned through us. But we feel that they really belong to anybody in the university who is doing remedial writing instruction and even though the English department is technically not doing remedial writing instruction, we know they are.

> ENGL: Under these circumstances, we have developed a little scheme to help the students, our majors, who want to be teachers, to provide more contact hours for the students who are taking our comp. classes, and to enlarge the class sizes

> in comp. (without jeopardizing the '25 or we all quit' stand of the comp. teacher)....
>
> Each semester more and more teachers have opted for this, because the tutors are doing a good job. What the tutors are to do largely are pre-read papers, write these supportive remarks, and keep office hours where they talk with the students. Particularly those who are having trouble. We use some money that we get from the study skills center to bankroll this tutor program out of the Chancellor's special fund for remedial writing. Because the students who see the tutors, overwhelmingly remedial students, that gets them a little extra exposure.

One Remedial Course. Composition programs of this type provide remedial instruction through one departmental course. Four programs, G, H, Q(A), and Q(B), use this arrangement.

Program G's course has a common midterm for all sections, although scheduling problems have prevented the use of a common final. However, beyond the common midterm, decisions about remedial course content are left to the instructors. The following exchange occurred when the remedial chair was asked about the remedial program.

PROGRAM G

> INT: ...What, in terms of the remedial program, what does the program consist of? Is it just English 100?
>
> REML: That is all we have.
>
> INT: So, no sequential courses.
>
> REML: Well, English 100 [remedial] feeds into 101 [regular comp.]. And I try to emphasize to our part-timers that a passing grade in English 100 means that the student has a likelihood of completing English 101 with a C. That is the standard for the

> course. ...But there is no real program. We are just a bunch of people, teaching the same course, trying to get the students to the point where they can write well enough to survive in freshman composition.

Programs Q(A) and Q(B) also do not provide for much uniformity of course content among sections of the remedial course. Both programs use the same remedial course, which is run by staff from Q(A), the English department composition program. Tutors who are attached to the remedial course are trained in a common fashion, but guidelines are not provided to the instructors of the course, nor are common exams. The primary shared feature among sections of the remedial course in programs Q(A) and Q(B) is the skill level of students who are required to take the course. The remedial course in program H also lacks mechanisms for establishing and maintaining a standard course content.

Preremedial and Remedial Courses. On most campuses there exists the recognition that some students are so much in need of help that instruction in preremedial skills, such as grammar and reading, is necessary. On campuses E and S the English department remedial program provides that preremedial assistance through courses which teach reading and vocabulary skills in conjunction with fundamentals of sentence and paragraph construction. Students operating at a somewhat higher level can find help in a remedial course which concentrates on composition skills. For both programs, this course is staffed by tutors as well as regular course instructors. At both levels of remedial instruction, course content is guided by written syllabuses and course descriptions. In addition, part-time faculty who teach these courses are products of the campus composition degree programs or have common, significant training in teaching writing. These programs are clearly well-coordinated between levels of instruction, in placement of students, and in instructional approach. Interestingly, both programs make extensive use of English Placement Test scores in assigning students to courses.

PROGRAM S

> COMP: The students are placed in the [English] 50s courses if their EPT total score is below 140. If their logic subscore is the lowest, they must begin in 51. If their reading subscore is lowest, they must begin in 52. And if their sentence construction subscore is the lowest, they must begin in 53.
>
> INT: And if they are all at the bottom?
>
> COMP: They begin in 51, and they must progress through the series sequentially to get to 100 [Remedial]. The only way they can jump a course out of sequence is with the instructor's approval. The faculty are delighted because for the first time in their lives the courses are fairly consistent. English 100 really contains people who need that instruction on that level. They don't have to hit a middle ground with a brilliant person sitting to their right and a dummy to their left.

Preremedial Courses and Remedial Adjunct. The remaining five (C, D, I, J(A), J(B)) of the twelve programs have some form of preremedial instruction also, even though they have no remedial courses. Instead, regular remedial students are placed in freshman composition classes and given tutorial assistance in class; the especially weak students are placed in preremedial classes. In general, the remedial coordinator has the most influence in the preremedial courses, although he or she may have hiring and/or training responsibilities for tutors working with sections of the freshman composition courses.

One obvious result is that preremedial content is more carefully defined than remedial by means of various techniques, including selection of common texts, use of common syllabuses, or administration of common finals. Formats for preremedial instruction vary from single writing courses to multi-course complexes which specialize in highly specific composition skills. Comments from two remedial program coordinators are typical of the degree of specificity in preremedial content, despite no remedial offering.

PROGRAM C

> REML: ...One other thing I forgot, we also have special comp. courses for students who score in the mid-range on the EPT who aren't low enough to be disastrous and to necessarily need work before they go into comp., although many of them do. We can't have a large remedial program, it's just too expensive. So this particular group of students gets placed in a special comp. course, taught by people who are specially concerned or interested or sympathetic to anxiety-ridden students and also we make the course no more than 20 in a course so they get more attention.

If they get a very low Reading score and I consider low somewhere around 133, 134, if that seems to be a serious problem there's an education course called "Efficient Reading" which I suggest they take. If they score very low in sentence construction they take the Sentence Construction course. If they score very low in logic I suggest that. However, if their scores are low but they do pretty well on the essay, if the essay is a 6 or a 7, I think twice about putting them into a really basic course....

INT: What if all scores are equally low?

REML: I try to get them into Reading, first of all. It seems to me they really need to work on their reading and try to learn some tricks for comprehending. Secondly, I put them into the Writing Workshop always if their scores are low, because that's a program which has all the writing accomplished in class and there are tutors there so they get immediate attention and they write a lot....

The 103 (Writing Workshop) course, since I generally set that one up, I tell everyone very specifically how it works and the other thing I do to keep a great deal of control on 103, is that I type up a schedule of assignments, exactly what's due on what day and what assignments will come in what week, I make sure that everything is ready for the TAs when they walk into class on the first morning, they know exactly what papers to hand out to students, what they're supposed to do that day, and I say if something works out in class, it just is too slow, you may skip an assignment, I let them think there's a little leeway, but finally, I make sure that all of the assignments come to this office and they are given to them. They are in a way advisory to the students but the assignments come from here.

PROGRAM J(A)

REML: ...When they take the English Placement Test, if their scores are such, 145 or below on the total score, and/or 135 and below on the Reading section, they cannot take freshman composition until they pass the 097 Reading course and/or the 098 Writing course. That is how we maintain a control.

> The "0" classes administer a common writing examination. Which is very reminiscent of the English Placement Test written sample. And that is scored holistically by all the remedial instructors and the tutors. The score, I think--this year the midterm score of 11 was required for the student to pass out. That meant one of us had to give it a six, which would be the highest score possible and another a five, at least...And at this point, the instructor would advise him either to take the regular freshman composition course or a course which we call restricted 155, which is our freshman composition course. The restricted 155 is for the student the instructor feels will not profit by another semester of 098, Basic Writing, but is perhaps not quite ready for the mainstream. And these restricted 155 courses carry regular composition credit but there is extra tutorial help and the instructors are specially chosen for their ability to work with that kind of student.

In sum, the twelve programs discussed here have arrived at four different approaches to the same problem of remedial writing instruction. Nevertheless, our remedial program coordinators demonstrate agreement that for lower levels of writing instruction, i.e., preremedial instruction, an effective program requires a good deal of centralized control and uniformity. The extent and level of structure in higher levels of remediation, however, seems to be a function of individual preferences, budget, and administrative viewpoints.

c. Remedial Instructors. As we progress through our analysis of the questionnaire and interview data, there is indication that the extent of tenure-track faculty involvement in the composition program may have an influence on the amount of control which a composition coordinator can exert over course subject matter and instructional techniques.

Our initial review of Fact Sheet and interview data in this area is restricted to courses which are strictly remedial; that is, freshman composition courses with remedial adjuncts as described in the previous section are excluded. We find only one program where more than 20 percent of the remedial sections are taught by tenure-track faculty. That program, I, reports tenure-track faculty teaching in 50 percent of its remedial sections. For all the other programs, there were either no tenure-track faculty involved in remedial instruction or the involvement was limited to a faculty member with some administrative responsibility for the program, e.g., the remedial coordinator. It appears that for remedial programs tenure-track participation is consistently low and has little explanatory power in accounting for variations in remedial programs.

4. The Upper-Division Writing Requirement: Procedures and Policies

The upper-division writing requirement was established systemwide in The California State University as a means of certifying competency in writing skills for graduates of the nineteen campuses. Although this is a graduation requirement, campuses have been strongly encouraged to certify students early in the junior year so that remedial recourse can be provided in a timely fashion to those who do not succeed in fulfilling the requirement. Each campus has been requested to establish its own standards and methods for certification, as well as to provide funds for administration of tests and establishment of courses. This latitude has resulted in a number of approaches to the problem.

Our analysis of interviews suggests that three basic factors relate to the implementation of the upper-division writing requirement and differentiate the certification process on our ten-campus sample. These factors are (a) the certification method itself, (b) instruction and opportunity for remediation, and (c) campus commitment to the process.

a. The Certification Method. Three certification formats are used variously on the campuses interviewed. The first requires that students take an exam, usually developed on campus, which they must pass to be certified. The second format provides a choice between an exam and a course; the student chooses one. The third variety offers a required course as the sole means for students to fulfill the requirement.

Three campuses, H, I, and J, use a campuswide examination as the sole method for enforcing the requirement. All students at campus J (programs J(A) and J(B)) must take the same exam. Campus I also offers an essay exam; H offers an essay accompanied by objective test items covering grammar, sentence structure, and paragraph organization. In describing essay scoring criteria, J and I include language use, mechanics, and organization. H does not, relying upon the objective test items for those criteria, emphasizing instead the completeness of the essay response to the given question.

Six of the ten sample campuses allow the student to satisfy the requirement by means of either a course or an examination. Although there is some variation in emphasis, programs C, E, F, G, Q, and S all allow the student to satisfy the requirement in this way. Program S is typical of this group, in terms of its procedures and staffing for the courses used for satisfying the requirement.

CAMPUS S

> INT: As I understand it, students on this campus meet the requirement by taking a test or by taking a set of approved courses. That's right?
>
> AVP: That's right.
>
> INT: What happens to students who prove deficient?
>
> AVP: If they prove deficient in examination, they can go take one of the courses. All of the courses, incidentally, are English courses. They have the option of approving other ones, but they have not yet done so.
>
> INT: Are you generally in support of the policies that have been....
>
> DEAN: Oh, yes. With one exception. I don't get enough staffing to staff the courses.

Program D is the only campus which provides a course as the sole mechanism for satisfying the upper-division writing requirement. The course is usually taken in a major department,

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and has a campuswide common final. This is one of the two campuses in the system that developed a graduation or upper-division writing certification before the establishment of systemwide standards in 1979. This campus' implementation of the requirement is especially interesting because of the attempt to create and maintain a truly campuswide sense of responsibility for the upper-division writing requirement. (Below, UD COORD stands for upper-division writing requirement coordinator.)

CAMPUS D

DEAN: ...What I think is the keynote to our success, if we have any success, is that generalized exam, everybody takes, in all sections. No matter what department the course is taught in, they take the same final exam and all the teachers come together and grade it; ...it is campuswide. And you have to give credit to [AVP] and [Dean of Undergraduate Studies] for insisting on that type of structure. Otherwise it is the English department against everybody else. And I think the members of the committee, both the English Requirements Committee and the [General Education Committee] have made a real difference in getting the rest of the university to cooperate and to take it seriously.

INT: Do you think they are?

DEAN: Well, it's too early to tell what's going to happen, yes, I think they are taking it seriously.

UD COORD: I'm responsible for the upper division writing workshop. But only with regard to the [common] final exam.

INT: Not with regard to the 100 courses total?

> **UD COORD:** No, I have no control over the courses.
>
> **INT:** That remains the purview of the committee, then?
>
> **UD COORD:** Not so much of the committee but of each department that elects to offer the 100 course.
>
> **INT:** Who makes the decision about [course] standardization?
>
> **UD COORD:** There really isn't [any]. What we're trying to do is to get a measure of standardization by backing it into the final exam. I'm trying to use that as a lever so that we can arrange to have some common core for all the courses. At this stage there is no core to the course.
>
> **INT:** Do you have to write the exam?
>
> **UD COORD:** Yes, I'm the chairman of an eight-person committee and we have struggled to find patterns [in writing topics] that we thought we could use and then from the patterns I've developed a number of different materials that correspond to the general pattern.

In the passages presented we have outlined a number of issues which arise as campus faculty and staff implement the upper-division writing requirement. For campuses using courses, staffing resources tend to be an issue. On every campus the location of responsibility for the requirement also is a matter of some discussion (we take this up later below). Finally, enforcement of the requirement can be a difficult administrative problem.

b. Opportunities for Upper-Division Writing Instruction. A critical feature of a graduation requirement such as the upper division writing requirement is the availability of some means for students who are deficient in the required skills to make good that deficiency without serious disruption of their collegiate careers. Strong efforts have been made to encourage campuses to enforce the requirement early enough in students' careers for remediation to take place. The intention is not to prevent students from graduating but to ensure that graduates are competent writers.

Remedial recourse and instruction vary from campus to campus primarily in terms of the source and extent of help. The main categories of upper-division remedial opportunity are (1) on your own, (2) department course, and (3) non-department assistance.

On campuses I, and J, there is very minimal preparatory and remedial instruction for meeting the graduation requirement; procedures for securing assistance are often not well defined, leaving students to their own devices. Perhaps because of limited resources or uncertainties about administrative responsibility, these campuses do not provide coursework for upper-division students who fail to pass their writing exam requirement. The student must seek assistance, as available, from learning skill centers or tutorial centers. Campus F, through offering students a choice between exam or course, does not provide back-up instruction for students failing either. All three programs allow students to "try again" endlessly.

CAMPUS J

INT: Now, let's talk about the campuswide writing issues and begin with the graduation requirement. As I understand it, students on this campus meet the requirement by examination only.

AVP: Yes, that's true.

INT: What happens to students who prove deficient?

AVP: They are given counseling and advice as to opportunities on the campus which are primarily through the Learning Resource Center and they are told to be prepared to take the examination again.

INT: Has anyone failed yet?

AVP: Oh, yes, and we have given some preliminary tests and even in those preliminary tests there were people who failed but now that we're giving them for real, the people are failing, and I can't recall what the rate is, it's a fair number of failures. The number of students who are taking the test are not the number who should be taking the test.

INT: They're putting it off?

AVP: Yes.

INT: Is it safe to assume they can take the test as many times as they want or is there a limit?

AVP: As far as I know, the policy allows them to take the test as many times as they want but they must show some intervening activity.

INT: Tutoring or something in between?

AVP: Yes.

Four programs, C, E, H, and S, have established English department courses as a basic part of their upper-division requirement. In the case of program H, students must take the exam, but the course is explicitly designed for students who fail the campus exam. The other three campuses have also integrated their remediation into the requirement; that is, a student may choose whether to take the exam or the course, but is required to take the course if he or she fails the exam. The following interview describes the procedures and processes at campus E.

CAMPUS E

> INT: Has anyone ever flunked the test? By that I mean, just not able to graduate?
>
> COMP: Oh, that aspect of the requirement is enforced. If a student--the requirement states that the students must take the exam in their junior year. If they fail it, take English 414.
>
> What in fact goes on, is that students take it whenever they feel like or don't take it at all and just take 414. But when they--at the point of graduation, their records are checked for one or the other. Either having passed the exam or having passed 414. And if they have done neither, they don't graduate. They really don't. We've got a new monitoring process now. That is, any student who fails the exam is automatically enrolled in our equivalent of 414 repeatedly. He is just automatically enrolled the next semester.

Formal instruction tied to the upper-division writing requirement is available on a campuswide basis on only three campuses; in this group, the English department tends to act in an advisory or review capacity for courses which are run by faculty in other departments. Campuses D, G, and Q have distributed some of the coursework related to the upper-divison requirement to non-English departments. Of these, campus G has not implemented its requirement; the program is still in the planning stages. Campus Q's program is of particular interest because of the "quality controls" behind the involvement of non-English faculty in upper-division writing requirement courses.

CAMPUS Q

> INT: ...I think there are only 3 or 4 other departments besides English which have approved courses. I didn't ask him which they were, but I believe he mentioned Music as one.
>
> AVP: History is one. They adapted rather substantially one of their courses to meet this requirement...there is one other, one of the areas of the sciences became one of these departments, I think Biological Sciences. There is some reflection here of what I think is one of the more positive developments, that is teaching of writing seminars to non-English department faculty. D_______ played a more than casual role in that since he taught the course and there was some funding provided 2 or 3 years ago and was, in my judgment, an enormously successful experiment and one that created small cadres of zealots around the campus. That is, faculty from other departments and I think there's some carryover there to departments that got interested in this area and not just to get more students for FTES (staffing allocations) purposes but for the challenge and some of these faculty, many of whom were senior faculty, took leadership in their departments. I know that's true of Biological Sciences and History because I can think of the people involved and I don't recall the others. That's an experiment we would like to replicate....

> INT: Do you have cooperative essay reading in [English] 250?
>
> ENGL: Yes, we do. That's the course that fulfills the literacy requirements so other departments that offer comparable courses all participate in the cooperative [common exam].

> INT: You have one reading that includes the courses outside of English and the English course as well. Now this one essay does not determine whether the student fulfills the requirement?
>
> ENGL: No, the cooperative essay is considered purely advisory. That means that the instructor may count it, as many do, as one paper. We would hope that the instructor would take that rather seriously so that if the student has done poorly all through the course and then does very well on that and earns a rather high grade that the instructor might possibly look at some of the papers to see if maybe he has been overly hard on something that is not a great problem rhetorically.

The availability of instruction as preparation or remediation for students fulfilling the upper-division writing requirement appears to vary widely among campuses. We find that even in a situation where resources are scarce, some campuses find ways to certify students, ways which also enhance campuswide visibility for writing skills courses and educate faculty about methods for alleviating writing skills problems.

c. Levels of Campus Commitment. To a great extent, the interview passages which have been presented as part of the review of the upper-division requirement have revealed the level of campus commitment as well. Depending on who is committed and to what extent, the writing requirement can be an enriching and creative experience or a genuine bother. Our analysis of this issue reveals four variations.

At one level of ambition and commitment we find two campuses which are attempting to establish a firm base of campuswide participation with English department standards of quality. Campuses D and Q both try to do this. We find their success seems to result from a history of interdepartmental cooperation, administrator support, and English department persistence.

CAMPUS D

> INT: Are there any other kinds of mechanisms for bringing the faculty together regarding unity issues?
>
> AVP: By bringing together you mean so that all participate in some way? The only one I know of is our upper-division writing workshop.
>
> Every student must take an upper division course in writing. Every department must either offer such a course or designate such a course in some other department, for example, in Journalism. Journalism could offer a course in news writing that would qualify for the upper-division writing requirement.
>
> Or the engineers could offer a course in scientific writing, or technical writing. The theory here is that in the first two years, through 1-A, 1-B and other experience, students ought to by then have mastered most of the detail of writing. Now we want to get them to use those skills in a more direct and more pertinent and specialized way.
>
> INT: Once they take a course, say, in Engineering Report Writing, are they then prepared to take that common final?
>
> AVP: They'd better be. My plan is to monitor those things, we're fairly new at this, if students from a given department aren't doing well in that common final then the assumption is there's nothing wrong with the students; something's wrong with what's going on in that department workshop, and we'd better look at it.

A second variation on the theme of commitment to the upper-division requirement is represented by campuses F, G, and J, where negotiations are still being conducted concerning responsibility on campus for the requirement. Interviews from these campuses are characterized by considerable freedom afforded to non-English departments in selecting courses and defining course content for meeting the requirement. Not surprisingly, this frequently results in campuswide deference to and reliance upon the English department.

CAMPUS G

INT: Your decision-making process. Let's start with the campus-wide writing policy like the upper-division writing requirement. Consider how you handle it on this campus. Your requirements state that your people can take either an exam or a course.

COMP: They can either take the exam or a course. The courses are going to be English A, Humanities B, Social Science C, Administration A and Natural Science A. The instructors from those ideally would come from the faculty of those schools.

We may end up instead hiring part-timers trained in teaching Social Science who have a writing background, or writing teachers who are willing to acquaint themselves with Social Science, or who have some background in the area.

INT: And who set this policy that the requirement would be fulfilled by a course and exam?

COMP: The college-wide committee on writing proficiency.

INT: Can you think of any other decisions affecting the comp. program that involve people outside the department?

COMP: No. I predict a drastic change in the comp. director's role as kind of the shepherd. And the shepherd of some rather unwilling sheep in some cases. And trying to get the people trained - to get good part-timers for these folks [i.e., in other departments]. Or getting the people retrained. Its going to be a horrible task. The composition coordinator now [has it] quite easy because it is all English department. The coordination is going to be very difficult, time-consuming, not nearly as amiably completed as they [try to] get people [requiring] 6 papers minimum, or just getting someone [in other departments] to teach it in the first place.

CAMPUS F

INT: Getting back to the ways of satisfying the upper-division writing proficiency requirement, you said it was schools in the arts and sciences where courses are available outside of English in writing to satisfy that. Would that be a dozen or so courses?

ENGL: A dozen is about how many. Next week the department will print out a report on the response of the university towards the requirement. It is [described] in the catalog, department by department. But there is no way, the role the English department is supposed to play in it, there is no way that we can play that role.

INT: Those three or five [English] courses you spoke of, did that immediately blossom forth in many sections to meet the need?

ENGL: No. I've offered only one section of it. And I plan to offer never more than one section unless resources come from somewhere else. Even when you discount those students who have cleared their requirement by examination, we'll still have an enormous population of students who will be needing such a class. I would guess that over half the departments in the university are using that [English] class as a means of satisfying the requirement. That came as a surprise to us in the summer. I was not a member of the university writing committee, and did not want to be. The department's position was that this is a university-wide problem which at that level should be dealt

> with by the entire university. We had one English department member as a part of the committee, but that person kept a rather low profile. And that was just exactly what we wanted.

For three other campuses, E, H, and S, the basic commitment to the upper-division writing requirement comes from the English department. This commitment is an exclusive one in that department leaders feel the requirement is within their province, and they intend to see it is properly established and maintained. It may not be a coincidence that on two campuses, E and S, the English department composition coordinator is a strong, dynamic individual (see earlier sections on composition coordinators). Even the campus H English chair, quoted below, makes it clear that the English department intends to control the significant decisions and operations for the campus upper-division writing requirement.

CAMPUS H

> ENGL: I persuaded the academic vice president to shift the responsibility to Arts and Sciences. I work very well with the dean there and he would give us the kind of support we needed.
>
> INT: You say the committee will be appointed?
>
> ENGL: The dean is going to appoint the committee. He's waiting for the writing proficiency coordinator and me to come over with a list of the members for him.
>
> INT: And who do you imagine will be on it?
>
> ENGL: I suspect it will include most of the people we've retrained. People who know something about composition. We'll probably pick some from other departments, too, but there are a couple of

> guys in the School of Education who grade for us on our writing proficiency exam. We'll pick one of them, we'll pick somebody from Engineering.
>
> INT: What will that committee do?
>
> ENGL: They will be advisory essentially. The writing proficiency coordinator will be the non-voting chair of the committee and that's the way she wants it.
>
> INT: Will they be dealing with nuts and bolts?
>
> ENGL: No, this will be the policy committee but policy is already pretty well established, the main role is when we come up with one of those awful situations like we have this summer where we have somebody with a genuine appeal on the grounds of some learning disability, a person who simply can't take an exam in a two-hour period and complete it, or something like that, what do you do with that person? Somebody ought to have the authority to give some kind of special consideration.

The final category of campus commitment is also one in which the English department takes primary responsibility for the upper-division writing requirement. However, it does so reluctantly, with little support from the campus as a whole, and with a lot of concern for the burden of the administrative responsibility. We find the two polytechnic campuses, C and I, belong in this category. Passages below demonstrate these feelings.

CAMPUS C

> INT: Let's begin with the campuswide issue as an example, the upper-division writing requirement for graduation, do you require an exam or a course?
>
> AVP: There are really 3 options. The student may enroll in a composition course, or may enroll in selected literature courses that have heavy

> writing components, or may take the exam. And the literature courses with the writing component we did some revision on those so that we're comfortable with that writing component.
>
> INT: You require an exam or a course on this campus, is that right?
>
> COMP: Right.
>
> INT: Who set that policy? Where did that come from?
>
> COMP: Essentially out of the department.
>
> INT: So it was not a campuswide committee?
>
> COMP: Check with [name], I think the idea originated here, it may have had to clear a campus-wide committee. It was thrown on our laps as I remember.

CAMPUS I

> ENGL: Oh, well, we--from the very start of the graduation writing competency requirement, I did not want us, meaning the English department, to play a major role, I wanted responsibility to be on faculty all over the campus.
>
> So we really kept a very low profile in it. ...I'd like other departments at the university to take more responsibility for writing achievement. In fact, right now, I see us entering in the near term a real crunch in demands for our composition courses by more departments, demands which we have refused. We've begun to refuse requests by other departments for adding new composition courses just like [English] 104 for their majors. We just can't handle it. I suggest to them that they should begin their own writing courses, [though] I know the potential dangers.

A review of the interview transcripts shows a wealth of data concerning approaches to the implementation of a writing skills graduation requirement. Only a fraction of these data have been dealt with here, and only for certain critical elements of the upper-division requirement. Substantial variation is evident for the three categories of data which we consider critical. Our best current information suggests that the extent of commitment to the writing requirement has had and will have a major impact on the structure and implementation of this requirement on the campuses.

5. Non-English Department Composition Activities

The most frequently used coding category in interview analysis was that for non-English department writing activities. Into this category we coded references to learning center programs in writing, organized tutorial support, specially funded writing skills programs, and other departments' writing instruction (exclusive of upper-division requirement courses). To qualify as an adjunct source of instruction for our coding purposes, the assistance had to be talked about as reliabily available, organized (operating as a unit, under a leader), systematic (planned and predictable), and focused upon writing instruction (not reading, library help, ESL, or study skills).

We are interested in this topic area for three reasons. First, we wonder to what extent supplemental writing instruction is controlled by the English department, and whether that instruction occurs in classes or outside, e.g., in tutoring centers. Second, we wonder how well different instructional organizations communicate with each other, coordinate their efforts, and/or share resources and responsibilites. Third, we wonder about the quality and utility of outside assistance in writing.

As we discussed our notes and reviewed sections from interviews, we felt a need to simplify a complex of features describing available services. We initially proposed five categories under our descriptor, "adjunct services in writing": (1) variety in outside services, (2) instructional content and format, (3) staffing, (4) funding, and (5) articulation between and among services and the English department. Unfortunately, describing campus program patterns in discrete categories generates more confusion than it resolves. Therefore, our organizational approach is more holistic, grouping campus programs across the five categories according to method of delivery.

There are three basic methods of outside service. First, on several campuses, the English departments have no direct responsibility for offering regular remedial courses. As a result, laboratory or study skills center offer programmatic remedial instruction through courses and tutors. In a second arrangement outside services specifically support the English department special programs, where weak students placed in regular composition classes receive tutorial assistance. The adjunct agency trains and monitors these tutors, and often tutorial work takes place in the agency's center or lab. The third alternative consists of outside services that make limited writing instruction available, along with other subject matter assistance, on a walk-in or teacher-referral basis. Combinations of these offerings exist on our ten-campus sample.

a. Courses and Tutors. On two campuses (D and F), the English departments do not provide regular courses to remedial students. Instead, these students are sent to a laboratory or center. On campus D, this service is still under the auspices of the English department; on campus F, the study skills department runs the lab. Both of these operations offer residence credit, but not graduation units, for their remedial writing courses.

Campus F's study skills center offers two courses, one referred to as "developmental writing," the other, at a still more basic level, as "pre-remedial." These represent the only remediation available to students who fail to qualify for the freshman composition course offered in the English department. The study skills director and writing specialist have developed a remedial program of instruction. Goals (student performance criteria), standards, curricula, and specific instructional methods exist for these courses. Part-time instructors are selected for their ability to teach writing; they are monitored and regularly evaluated.

In addition to providing remedial coursework, the study skills center provides tutors to the English department, where they are used extensively in freshman composition classes, especially classes taught by full-time tenured faculty. The department chair, composition coordinator, and academic vice president, remark on the reluctance of regular English faculty to accept responsibility for writing instruction, relying instead upon the study skills department's writing center for remedial writing instruction for the campus.

PROGRAM F

> INT: On the matter of where policy comes from, what do you see as the role of the English department in composition program policy making?
>
> AVP: The role of the English department ought to be the expert source for any policies that are adopted by the campus. I think it has not played that role very well in the past here, but I think it is likely to in the future to play a larger and more important part. Like many English departments until recently - and I mean very recently - the English department regarded their basic composition courses as courses which were as much literature as they were writing. That's changed. Now everybody, as I understand it from [name], has to agree that they will be teaching composition, not literature.
>
> I don't know if you've talked to [name], or not, they've hired a few [composition] people... so they are thinking about that much more seriously and constructively than they were for a long time. So I think that the role that they advocated, essentially, in writing...well the reason the Study Skills Center exists is because the English department wasn't providing any opportunity for remedial work and wasn't interested in doing so.

> **INT:** You described earlier the position of the department with regard to composition. The fact that they were not trained or have any special knowledge in it? Has the feeling and the level of understanding changed?
>
> ENGL: A little. [It's a] Slow sort of thing. The most hopeful sign that there'll be a little more sophistication in matters in comp. is that our regular faculty will be using more and more tutors.
>
> . . . .
>
> We use some money that we get from the study skills center to bankroll this tutor program out of the Chancellor's special fund for remedial writing. Because the students who see the tutors overwhelmingly, remedial students, they get them a little extra exposure.
>
> The [English] faculty is willing to do this because it does cut down the number of hours they need to see students in their office. They can schedule the tutor on the basis of how large the class is.

On Campus D, remedial work also takes place in a laboratory setting. However, this writing lab operates as part of the English department, the lab director also serving as remedial program coordinator. Two remedial courses are offered in the lab. The "pre-remedial," two-unit course is intensive, individualized, lab work; in the three-unit remedial course students mainly work in a class setting with lab support. The courses have clearly articulated curricula and common final exams; the instructional staff are carefully trained and evaluated.

In addition to the structured remedial coursework, the writing lab offers tutor assistants for the English department composition classes and for individual students who come to the lab for help. These functions seem comparable to those of the campus E skills center. However, there is an important contextual distinction between these two labs. Unlike the campus F English faculty, the campus D faculty seem more enthusiastic and knowledgeable about writing instruction. They view the lab tutoring services as a support for their own work, not as a means to increase class size, decrease office hours, and counterbalance the effects of reluctant full-timers. In fact, the lab efforts are well integrated with those of the overall writing program, including the upper-division writing requirement.

PROGRAM D

> COMP: The lab is a crucial part of the lower division program, fundamental to 1-A, one of the stronger parts of our whole program, that's [remedial coordinator's] province.
>
> INT: He and I are going to meet this afternoon and go over it very carefully.

> REML: It's part of our whole way of working that the writing lab is totally integrated with the classroom thing and there's very close liaison all the time and I don't want those things separated at all, I want everything to blend together. Many of the remedial course teachers bring their classes to the writing lab and work with them there and we have very good relationships.
>
> INT: Are there any people from the English department involved in the program in addition to you and [name]?
>
> REML: Well, everybody knows about it. One important part of our program is the liaison system. Every faculty member who has a composition student has a tutor that reports to him once a

week. And that tutor brings in all the cards that have the test results. And at the same time the accumulated weekly roster of student visits and tests taken and passed.

So every week, every composition teacher, with students in the lab, 2L3, or 1A or 1B, gets a weekly report showing how many lab visits their students have made, what tests they have taken and the results of the test. And if they failed, why they failed. Every week they get this report. A tutor comes in and has a conference. They talk about problem students and why so and so is not getting there and that kind of thing. There is a constant reminder of everything that is happening.

INT: And the upper-division writing requirement has had even more influence, hasn't it?

REML: No, not yet. I foresee that a large number of lab people will come in. We are getting some support from the AVP's office to give writing help to the 100W [upper-division writing requirement]. We were so busy converting to the new remedial program that I did not stress it. But it will be a bigger and bigger thing from now on. We have got to help them. They are not going to be able to graduate from this place unless they get through the writing workshop.

b. Specially Funded Writing Programs. Special programs operate from outside funds allocated specifically for writing instruction for individuals or small groups. However well organized and useful, these services are not alternatives to regular English department courses, nor are they regular full-term classes taught by academic track staff. Instead, they are specially funded and usually employ a "writing specialist" who coordinates paid tutors. We see a distinction between this type of writing instruction program and that offered by learning centers and Educational Opportunity programs where writing is one small part of a multiple-subject assistance program. In the latter case, writing assistance is provided for students who have particular problems; in the former, regular curricular sequences, or units of work, in writing await the student. Two campuses in our interview sample currently have specially funded writing programs.

On campus G, the program receives federal funds under a grant to improve student skills. While the program is not necessarily restricted to writing skills, it has deliberately developed, as a major emphasis, a writing skills program of instruction coordinated by a writing specialist. The specialist also teaches part time in the English department. While that provides an opportunity for the articulation of the program work with course work, the English department does not have any control over the administration or resources of the special program.

The instructional organization of the program is based upon the workshop format. Students' problems are diagnosed and individualized programs of remediation are suggested. The instructional staff consists of paid "tutors" who are graduate students in English. They are trained before they are allowed to lead workshops, and their work is monitored.

Another striking feature of the special program's operation is the extent of communication and cooperation between its staff and the staffs of the learning center, the EOP department, the English department, and other departments.

This is evident in attempts to avoid duplication of effort and to send students to the agency best suited to their needs. (Below the writing specialist is designated "WTG SPEC.")

PROGRAM G

INT: Do you structure any of your workshops around any of the [English department] courses specifically? Like do you have workshops for just the E100 people? And workshops for the E101 people? [Note: E100 is the English remedial course, E101 is freshman comp.].

WTG SPEC: No. The workshops...let me give you a copy of the schedule.

INT: I'd love that. Oh, they are skills mainly.

WTG SPEC: Sure. We talked about what kinds of things we could do given the fact that our audience might be transitory. It is idealistic at best to assume you could do anything to improve someone's writing in ten weeks--40 hours. We have even less time than that. And it is a sort of a catch as catch can situation.

And so we thought that maybe the students might feel like they had more control over their writing if we presented small segments. To say, here are some things, [for example,] and there really are ways of controlling them. Commas don't get put in by the one, two, three comma, one, two, three comma rule. There really are reasons why you put them wherever you put them.

And so we picked specific topics; things that we could talk about in one hour and give the students some kind of notion of what to do with. And then move on to something else. And a person could come to one of the labs and benefit, we feel. Or come to all eight and it would still help.

INT: So you could call these labs, not workshops.

> WTG SPEC: Yes. And the format is that there is, depending upon the topics, about a half hour of lecture/discussion. And then some actual writing.
>
> INT: There is the learning resource center, the EOP program and you as support services, as I understand it, is that right?
>
> WTG SPEC: Yes.
>
> INT: Do you feel that you work cooperatively with them and well and you are in good communication?
>
> WTG SPEC: Yes...for the purpose of writing remediation we have divided our efforts in half. The learning center is responsible for subject-specific writing problems; if a student is writing a paper for a history class and has questions or does not quite understand what is going on, that person will go to the learning center. Students who have ongoing basic writing difficulties go through [this program] and ultimately through me.
>
> This year, all of us are working much more closely now. And that is an exciting thing. It has meant that all of us had had to give up a little bit of flexibility. And, of course, it is always a little painful to do that but that transition is being made with incredible ease.
>
> INT: And you all seem to know what the other one is doing. I know it is a small campus, but that is still an incredible accomplishment for even a small campus.
>
> WTG SPEC: The acting dean has worked really hard to make that happen. The English department chairman has also been extremely cooperative.

On campus H the special program is a tutoring center which is run by the remedial English coordinator. Although this arrangement appears, at first, similar to the campus D writing lab, it differs in an important way. The tutoring center does not offer regular writing coursework. Its domain is exclusively tutoring assistance. This service is available to any student by faculty referral or on a "walk-in" basis. A major role for the center is providing tutoring support for the remedial course offered by the English department.

PROGRAM H

> REML: The teachers in the remedial courses are informed that if we have sufficient tutors they may use tutorial time in the classroom. But this year, no one has chosen to incorporate it as a part of the classroom activity.
>
> But the students in the English 1 [remedial] classes use the tutoring center a great deal. They use it by referral or by their own realization that they need the help. We serve a good number of English students.
>
> INT: But it is voluntary, I take it.
>
> REML: Well, it depends. The teachers may require it of the students. And if they do, we keep records. The teachers do come down and check to see if the students are using it. But again, it depends on the individual teacher or instructor.

c. Limited Assistance. Every campus in our sample has an EOP department offering academic assistance to students admitted under the Educational Opportunity Program.[1] The generic "learning center" is also omnipresent in this sample. Like EOP departments, learning centers offer academic assistance in a variety of subject areas. Unlike EOP, learning centers serve all students, usually as those students seek assistance, although sometimes by faculty referral. These agencies often offer tutoring help for writing problems that the student raises or the tutor diagnoses in writing done for or given as a course assignment.

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[1] These students do not meet regular admissions criteria and therefore are considered "disadvantaged." While these students are usually ethnic minorities, disadvantaged Anglos may be EOP students as well.

Some campuses in our sample rely exclusively upon these services to supply out-of-class assistance in writing skills. These campuses are C, E, I, J, Q, and S. For some campuses this means there is only a limited amount of outside writing help available for students. For other campuses, these agencies have worked to fill a perceived need and have developed more sophisticated assistance.

On campuses C, I, and S, outside help in writing is not extensive. Two of these campuses, C and I, are polytechnic universities and their learning centers are less concerned with providing writing and reading assistance than assistance in mathematics and the sciences. Their students who need writing assistance often receive better service in the English remedial courses or from EOP tutors. Campus S presents a unique case. The remedial/composition coordinator was originally hired to develop and manage a writing program in the learning center, which she did. When she moved to the English department, she took with her the responsibility and authority for the remedial courses and tutoring assistance program. Her position is still funded through learning center resources, and there is some concern on the part of the learning center staff about the loss of their writing program to the English department.

The learning center director on campus J also describes the loss of some writing assistance responsibilities, in this case to the Chicano Studies and the Pan-African Studies departments, which have each created their own complete writing programs. (See the section on Composition Programs for a description of these programs, identified as J(B).) In response, the campus J learning center has carved out a new writing domain for itself, the upper-division writing requirement. (Below "LC DIR" stands for learning center director.)

PROGRAM J

> LC DIR: See now in terms of writing programs we not only have drop-in service...but we have huge program workshops and materials for students who have to take the [upper-division] writing proficiency exam.
>
> INT: Yes, that is what I was going to say on the upper-division writing requirement for graduation, how has it affected your program?
>
> LC DIR: Well, I felt like the writing proficiency exam is an occasion to create a...writing [program] that is designed to both prepare students to take it and offer short courses for a certain group of students who fail, mainly for students who fail the exam.
>
> My reason was that the Center could play a very significant role for a number who simply need a basic refresher of composition skills to pass the test. We can offer very inexpensive prep-sessions and also we have developed a short course for students who fail.

> INT: You started a minute ago to ask whether you should describe the prep-session. Could you do it very briefly?
>
> LC DIR: Let me just lay out what it is briefly. We also have developed independently a two-hour audio cassette workbook, How to Take A Writing Proficiency Exam, which is experience-based because we use a whole past exam question and we take students through step by step, with basic issues such as read the question carefully, and we use examples from past exams where students have done well. All the illustrations are based on actual student performance. So the student who wants to prepare can come in any time the center is open and sit down with a cassette and listen to a combination lecture-exercise and with a culminating writing exercise.

Despite the more restricted offerings of these learning centers, many of the same campuses have EOP services that appear fairly well developed in the area of writing skills. Of course, these programs are not (at least in theory) open to all students. For many EOP programs, involvement in writing instruction began with an active role in the development of a remedial writing program. Historically, EOP students have been seen as those "most in need of assistance," and the EOP department has had money to provide that assistance. In most of our EOP and learning center interviews, people mention that the learning center grew out of an EOP-funded operation. On many campuses the learning center still shares EOP facilities or funds (though technically this is an inappropriate use of money targeted for EOP students only). Campuses that still have active EOP writing instruction are G and Q.

PROGRAM G

> EOP: Our approach here for the last seven or eight years has been heavy emphasis on writing for all of our students. And the English 100 class, which is our intensive English, was a few years back, kind of jointly initiated by EOP and the English department.
>
> Before that was a campuswide, so to speak, course. I mean it has always been campuswide in terms of enrollment, but up until five years ago, it was about 90% EOP students involved in that course. So we used to have only one or two sections a quarter. And that was the format.
>
> Then as EPT [systemwide placement test] became a factor in identifying students, then the class naturally expanded and more sections were offered. And consequently the number of EOP students in a class proportionately decreased, which is what we really wanted.
>
> Again, our philosophy has been that our students should be involved with courses that are [already in the] curriculum rather than developing separate courses that don't benefit the students. So that has been our purpose. From that standpoint, we have always had a writing component that we require our students to participate in, before English was a requirement.

These active EOP writing programs, G and Q, offer structured instructional classes in writing as well as the more common tutorial assistance. These programs appear carefully planned; instructors have writing backgrounds; tutors receive training. Students are diagnosed for placement into the most directly applicable instructional component. Also characteristic of these programs is the effort to follow up students and to maintain an active, open communications line with the English department.

PROGRAM Q

> EOP: I teach an Independent Study for the English department in Afro-American Lit. My concentration is in the Harlem Renaissance Period in Afro-American Lit. I've taught Independent Studies in Harlem Renaissance, and in the summer, for five years, I've developed a six-week writing workshop for EOP admits. It's basically a writing course that bridges them into English 100. I teach that every summer. During the year I do Independent Studies.
>
> Another member of our staff, one of our counselors, also has a degree in English and he and I separately read the [diagnostic] writing sample and make a determination of what areas they need to work on.
>
> ...the writing workshop is non-credit even though the new 009 [remedial] they've developed in the English department is very similar in some ways to what I've been doing for seven years.

6. Afterword

The interview process has provided the project with a considerable amount of information about attitudes, policies, problems, and rationales affecting college writing instruction. For this report we have been able to meaningfully analyze only five major categories of that information: (1) program goals and instruction philosophies, (2) composition coordinators' responsibilities, (3) remedial procedures and practices, (4) the upper-division writing requirement, and (5) non-English department activities.

Results of Analyses of the Faculty Questionnaire

Faculty Beliefs about Teaching Writing

This section reports analyses of descriptive data, focusing particularly upon what we have discovered about tenured instructors: what they believe about the students they teach, the importance of composition research, and the effects of composition instruction itself. We are focusing here upon the composition teaching of tenured faculty, since these faculty play an important role in many writing programs--despite the fact that the composition practices of the tenured are usually hidden from view. The interviews we describe just above indicate that writing program administrators usually know quite well what is going on in the classes taught by part-time faculty and teaching assistants. But what happens in the classrooms and curricula of the tenured faculty who more or less willingly teach composition is not only unknown but the subject of many dark suspicions. Our research allows us to organize and reflect upon what they say they do and what they report their attitudes to be.

The information summarized here originated in individual responses to the questionnaire which was sent, in early spring 1982, to all those who regularly teach lower division composition in the California State University. Chapter Five describes the development, distribution, response rate and procedure, analysis of demographic data and other matters relating to that questionnaire. The document and the compiled results for each question are given in full in the Appendix volume.

Chapter Eight: Results of Analyses

A Few Words About This Data Analysis

As we pointed out in Chapter Five, we constructed the questionnaire in a way that allowed us to avoid relying upon responses to any one or even two items to draw conclusions about faculty attitudes and beliefs. Instead, we devised item sets, each covering a different dimension or facet of a subject area, and we allowed for a wide range of choices along each dimension. In addition, our survey is not a checklist; respondents did not simply give yes-or-no answers about whether or not they do/have/use something. In every item, we required our respondents to answer by assessing "degree" (of use, importance, or influence, for example). Thus, our data allow us to see gradations of difference, where they occur.

One of the main sources of information about these differences among faculty attitudes and beliefs is the set of 31 "Likert" items (items which ask for degree of agreement with a given statement) covering a range of topics such as attitudes towards composition instruction, department colleagues teaching composition, students in composition and remedial courses, program and department leadership, and campus policies affecting the writing program.

A second source of information about faculty perspectives is a set of 23 items requiring the faculty respondents to evaluate various influences on the composition program. For each of these influences, such as the department composition committee, the student population, and the available adjunct instructional services on campus, respondents assessed the kind (from positive to negative) and degree (from high to low) of impact these influences had upon composition instruction.

Most of our information on instructional practices comes from six sets of questions asking instructors about what they do in class: the themes underlying the organization and sequence of instruction, the importance of various composition materials to the instruction, the frequency of certain composition activities in the classroom, the classroom arrangement, the frequency of particular kinds of writing assignments, and their usual responses to student writing.

We used answers to these and other items to develop two different factor analyses, a statistical procedure which examines patterns of responses to find a common set of items in those patterns. Where a common item grouping is found, the items are said to form a "factor," a hypothetical trait which underlies and "accounts for" the apparent clustering of those items. A factor (to which the researchers then affix a descriptive name) can then be used to generate a "score" which summarizes the particular pattern of answers given by any one respondent. This "score" describes the respondent in terms of the factor, for example, "high" on the "Bah Humbug" attitude factor.

Since we measured dimensions of the same subject area, such as attitudes toward composition course work, or, preferred instructional approach, we expected to find factors which grouped questionnaire items relating to those subject areas. We did, in fact, derive a substantial number of instructional and attitudinal factors (thirteen) from responses to our twelve page questionnaire. When we refer to a factor which describes "Level of Commitment," for example, we know we are discussing responses to items that many people see as related.

Although our thirteen factors provide a wealth of information about the faculty who teach composition, we will discuss here only some of that information so that we may expand our descriptions and consider implications rather than briefly list summary findings.

Attitudes and Beliefs

Bah Humbug

Table 8.9 displays the questionnaire items which comprise this factor. These seven Likert items have a strong "anti-composition" bent to them, and for this reason (perhaps too whimsically) we call this the "Bah Humbug" factor. Faculty in our sample demonstrate a consistent pattern of responses to these items, whether positive or negative. That is, those people who feel that tenured and tenure-track faculty do not need review or coordination of their instruction are also those who avoid faculty development and undergraduate writing courses; they also oppose remedial writing at the college level, see "writing as process" as one more passing fad, and (as one might expect) do not feel that their students improve very much as a result of a single writing course. The validity of this grouping of items also holds for those faculty respondents who reject these attitudes; they too demonstrate a pattern of answers to items in this factor, though, of course their pattern goes in the opposite direction.

Table 8.9

Items Comprising the Bah Humbug Factor

Likert Items: (1 = strongly agree; 4 = strongly disagree; 9 = unsure)

Generally speaking, in this department tenured and tenure-track instructors do *not* need review or coordination of their writing instruction.

I am *not* likely to attend meetings designed to improve my writing instruction, e.g., faculty development or "retraining" sessions.

Had I the choice, I would never teach undergraduate writing courses.

Students who are not prepared to do college-level writing should not be admitted to this campus.

College resources should *not* support remedial programs in writing.

Much of what I've heard about "writing as process" strikes me as yet another fad in the field of composition instruction.

In every composition course I've taught here, I've finally had to admit to myself that most students do not improve their writing very much by the end of a single school term.

Table 8.10

Analysis of Variance on Bah Humbug Factor Scores

source variable	df	sum of squares	F value
Main Effects			
Faculty Rank	1	3.63	6.60*
Course Referent	2	2.19	1.99
Campus	18	8.73	.88
2-Way Interaction Effects			
Rank x Referent	2	.63	.57
Rank x Campus	18	5.40	.55
Referent x Campus	31	13.35	.78
3-Way Interaction Effects			
Rank x Referent x Campus	15	3.60	.44

*p = .01; (N = 418)

We have generated "factor scores" for each factor for each person responding to our questionnaire. Using these factor scores we looked for characteristics that differentiate between people with "higher" and "lower" scores on the Bah Humbug factor. Using the statistical tool of analysis of variance, we tested for and found these differences depending upon whether faculty report themselves as part- and full-time lecturers or tenured and tenure-track ($p = .01$). (Table 8.10 also contains tabled ANOVA statistics for this factor.) When we look at the average scores of each status grouping, it is clear that the lecturers generally demonstrate the more positive attitude, that is, they reject the Likert statements that make up the factor, thus yielding a "negative" average ($X = - .11$); while the regular faculty generally tended to be the ones who agreed with "anti-composition" sentiments expressed in those same statements, thus yielding a positive mean score ($X = + .07$).

Level of Commitment

Our factor analysis procedure uncovered a second factor seemingly related to the Bah Humbug factor. We refer to this second factor as "Level of Commitment" because so many of the Likert items that it subsumes describe the level of instructor effort and interest in planning for and teaching composition courses. The actual questionnaire items in this factor are listed on Table 8.11.

In addition to the Likert attitudinal items, two items from the instructional goals section of the questionnaire are part of the pattern of responses described by this factor. Those two instructional goals are "teaching editing skills" and "teaching invention skills." The grouping of these two goals seems counterintuitive; editing skills (as opposed to "revising skills," which was also a goal choice) seems focused upon the finished product of writing, whereas "invention skills" seems focused upon the process of writing, as articulated in newer composition research and theory. As it turns out, these goals are not endorsed by the same set of people. The factor describes two different groups of respondents. Though both groups tend to answer the Likerts in the same manner, one group is made up largely of composition instructors who value "teaching invention skills;" and the other group basically consists of remedial writing instructors who value "teaching editing skills." This difference in reponses between remedial and composition course instructors arises only for the instructional goal statements. Response patterns for the five Likert items which comprise the main thrust of the factor do not differ in this way.

As with the Bah Humbug factor, we generated individual scores on this Level of Commitment factor. We used those scores in carrying out analysis of variance to determine if particular kinds of group characteristics distinguished between higher and lower scores on the factor. We found that, unlike the Bah Humbug factor, instructor status does not account for statistically significant differences in scores; nor does it matter whether the respondents were referencing their regular or remedial teaching assignments. The one grouping characteristic that does result in significant differences in factor scores is "campus." This probably reflects an important underlying difference between the two factors. Level of Commitment is primarily composed of Likert items which describe composition instruction as a workload issue related to collegiality; Bah Humbug presents composition as a scholarly field of study with important effects upon students, eliciting much more personal reactions. Thus, the Level of Commitment factor seems to relate to faculty morale, which, in turn, seems to vary widely from campus to campus. And, despite such similarities across CSU campuses as teaching load and salary structure, the differences by campus turn out to be very substantial.

The overall average score on this factor, across all nineteen campuses, is .06, and the range of scores runs from a low of - .26 to a high of + .60. The .60 score is an extreme one; the next closest positive campus score is .27. We are continuing to analyze these data and expect to publish correlations of this factor with both student outcomes and campus characteristics. We expect to find a significant correlation with them both, as well as some relation to what we call in the next chapter "campus climate for composition."

Table 8.11

Items Comprising Level of Commitment Factor

Likert items: (1 = strongly agree; 4 = strongly disagree; 9 = unsure)

My responsibilities in composition instruction require more preparation and "homework" on my part than do my other teaching responsibilities.

I have tried out some of the new ideas about teaching composition suggested to me by my colleagues.

Student evaluations of my instruction in composition should be a part of my record for promotion or retention.

Concern with students' feelings about writing is a legitimate component of my instructional responsibilities in teaching composition.

I have a fairly good sense of what is going on in other composition classes in the English Department.

Themes underlying the organization and sequence of your writing class instruction: (1 = very important; 4 = not important at all; 9 = not applicable)

teach editing skills

teach invention skills, such as planning, prewriting, clustering, heuristics

Table 8.12

Analysis of Variance on Level of Commitment Factor Scores

source variable	df	sum of squares	F value
Main Effects			
Faculty Rank	1	.09	.22
Course Referent	2	1.18	1.49
Campus	18	11.89	1.67*
2-Way Interaction Effects			
Rank x Referent	2	.12	.15
Rank x Campus	18	6.70	.94
Referent x Campus	31	9.00	.75
3-Way Interaction Effects			
Rank x Referent x Campus	15	6.36	1.07

*p = .05; (N = 418)

Conclusions from this Analysis

The analysis of these data has demonstrated the statistical identification of coherent sets of attitudes about composition on the part of teaching faculty. It is clearly useful to develop such knowledge, which moves beyond anecdote or merely personal experience and suggests both origins and locations for these attitudes. We have also identified six general approaches to composition instruction now in use by our sample of faculty, each approach expressing a different underlying theory of instruction and a different sense of purpose for college writing. The following section of this chapter describes and discusses these factors.

Patterns of Composition Instruction

In this section we further discuss findings from the questionnaire data, but focus upon the six factors describing preferences in instructional practices as reported by the 418 faculty respondents. We describe below some of the ways different groupings of faculty approach the teaching of remedial and regular composition classes.

The fact that our questionnaire generated six distinct instructional factors is testimony to the coherence and logic of our approach to the problem of describing common practices in writing instruction. Though these factors seem "obvious" to many, our data provide statistical evidence for confirming or disputing a number of widely accepted beliefs. Contrary to some approaches to this issue, we did not begin with presumed groupings or categories; the statistical operation of factor analysis provided patterns of responses on questionnaire items and we proceeded inductively to attempt to understand, name, and explain the meaning of the patterns so generated. This procedure provides not only a description but also a measure for assessing who holds which instructional beliefs in each of three instructional contexts: remedial, freshman composition, and other lower-division writing courses. Of the 418 respondents, 233 choose to report on their freshman composition course instruction; 74 reference their remedial coursework; and 64 describe instruction in other lower-division writing courses they teach. Forty-seven neglected to mark their course referent and are excluded from analyses reported here.

Of the 74 who reference their remedial coursework, the majority, 43, are contract (not tenure-track) instructors. Of the 233 describing their freshman composition course, more than half, 132, are tenured/tenure-track. Of those 64 teaching "other lower-division writing courses," the majority, 44, are tenured/tenure-track.

A Multi-faceted View of Writing Instruction

Most of the items on our questionnaire asked respondents to reflect on their instructional practices in teaching remedial writing, first-term freshman composition, or some other lower division writing course. After indicating course referent, all respondents answered the same set of items on their classroom instructional practices and goals.

In constructing the questionniare items on instruction, we wanted to avoid relying upon one or two answers to a multiple choice item to make judgments about what was going on in composition classrooms. We decided upon a multi-faceted approach, partitioning instruction into six categories in which faculty make instructional decisions: 1) themes underlying the organization and sequence of writing class instruction, 2) materials used in writing class instruction, 3) classroom teaching arrangements in writing classes, 4) kind and number of writing assignments required of writing class students, 5) frequency of various kinds of response to student writing, and 6) proportion of in-class time spent in each of a variety of activities.

Themes. We provided eleven theme statements for respondents to rate in terms of importance to course instruction ("very important" to "not important at all"). These theme statements represented a variety of perspectives, from "expose students to good literature" and "allow for practice in writing activities necessry for success in other college courses," to "teach invention skills, such as planning, prewriting, clustering, heuristics" and "allow for in-class writing in a workshop setting." Many respondents rated more than one theme "very important."

Faculty also indicated the source or reason for their ratings: department policy, informal faculty agreement, course traditon, personal preference, experimenting with new ideas (and "not applicable"). Unexpectedly, items on the source or reason for instructional decisions did not show much variation of any sort (among faculty status, from campus to campus, or among course referents). For the most part, faculty consistently checked department policy and personal preference as the reasons behind their instructional practices, a curious combination in the light of the variety of practices normally used by so many faculty in the same department.

The most likely reason for this combination, in our judgment, is that many department policies may be general enough to be all things to all people; in such a case, there is a policy supporting every teacher's practices, whatever those practices may be. Some faculty may have checked "department policy" as an influence even when there is no policy at all, since no policy suggests general approval of whatever may occur. We suspect that the faculty and the department in most cases give so little attention to alternatives for classroom practice that most composition teachers simply imagine that what they do is department policy; it thus becomes possible to be an autonomous teacher who conforms to department rules no matter what one does.

Materials. We offered faculty a list of eleven kinds of materials that could be used in support of writing instruction. These varied from grammar handbooks to students' own writings. As with instructional themes, respondents rated importance of each item.

Classroom Arrangements. In this section we offered four items describing interaction between the instructor and the students, and asked respondents to rate the frequency with which they engaged in each. Types of interaction included small group and individualized work, formal lectures and guided discussions (for example, "simultaneous small group activities, during which

I circulate among the working groups.") Choices of frequency ranged along a four point scale from "almost always" to "rarely or never." Again, we queried faculty on the underlying reason for these choices, and again we found most faculty selecting both department policy and personal preference.

In-class Activities. We provided a list of fourteen in-class activities that might reasonably occur in support of writing instruction: writing "on a given topic" or "topics of their own choosing," or "free writing or journal writing"; discussing "upcoming assignments," or "mechanics and standard usage," or "linguistics"; and others.

This section required us to combine measures of emphasis and frequency. We recognized that particular class activities might be concentrated at the beginning of a term or dispersed across the term, recurring on and off as part of a class session. We managed to devise a rating system that took these differences into account and yet provided some sense of range from "not done in class" or "at all" to "a major activity in every class."

Assignments. Oddly enough, we found very little variation among faculty in their reports of their writing assignments and of their responses to student writing. This lack of variation in answers made it impossible for us to find distinguishing "patterns" of responses, and, thus, impossible for these items to be strongly linked with one or another of the patterns of instructional themes, materials, arrangements, or activities.

Six Patterns of Instruction

Responses to themes, materials, teaching arrangements, and in-class activities combined to form six instructional factors. We refer to each factor as an instructional "approach" to teaching writing. We selected specific factor names to represent the broad instructional theme characterized by the items the factor encompasses. The six patterns of instruction represented by our factors are listed on tables 8.13 through 8.18. They describe the following approaches to writing instruction: 1) Literature, 2) Peer Workshop, 3) Individualized Writing Lab, 4) Text-Based Rhetoric, 5) Basic Skills, and, 6) Service Course.

The numbers in the Item Weight column of each chart represent the relative strength of each questionnaire item as a member of that factor group. The higher the weight, the more confidence we have in it as a characteristic of that trait. Items with lower weights are relatively less reliable indicators of the trait. We have included in our factors all items whose weights indicate at least a moderate influence (weights at and above .35). For example, of the six questionnaire items comprising the Literature Approach (Table 8.13), "analyzing literature" has the highest item weight (0.82), which indicates it is the most stable and, therefore, most characteristic element of the trait.

We have generated scores for individual faculty respondents on each of the six factors. These scores describe the degree to which an instructor's teaching is characterized by the trait embodied in each factor. Individual scores were accumulated into group averages which we used to describe 1) status groups made up of tenured and contract instructors, and 2) course groups made up of remedial composition, regular freshman composition, and other lower-division writing courses. (We cannot contrast the nineteen campus groups because they each contain a different ratio of contract to tenured instructors. The average of one campus might represent largely the responses of tenured faculty, while the average score of another campus might reflect its greater number of contract lecturers. Thus, we would end up comparing tenured instructors with contract instructors instead of campus with campus.)

The Literature Approach. The main thrust of this approach is classroom analysis of literature (weight = .82). Class activities and instructional materials also emphasize the use of literature in writing instruction.

The Peer Workshop Approach. Small group activities and arrangements are the critical elements of this factor: students working with other students, in small groups, discussing or scoring their own writing. Instructors committed to this approach provide prewriting activities, allow for writing on a topic of one's own choosing, and use student writings as instructional material in such activities as peer criticism and scoring.

Individualized Writing Lab Approach. At first glance, this factor seems to describe the same instructional environment as the "Peer Workshop" factor, though only one questionnaire item is shared between them: "to provide regular in-class writing in a workshop setting." In the context of items comprising the "Peer Workshop" factor, the notion of "workshop" describes a variety of small group activities. On the other hand, the items comprising the "Individualized Writing Lab" approach reflect an emphasis upon the individual, providing a setting in which the course instructor or a tutor works with student writers by themselves. This factor does not include questionnaire items describing in-class discussion or instructional materials. Instead, most items emphasize "doing" writing in class.

The Text-Based Rhetoric Approach. This approach to instruction relies heavily upon rhetoric textbooks and what publishers call "rhetoric readers," that is, anthologies arranged according to rhetorical categories. These provide models of writing and style guidelines, and they are used to generate class discussion, generally in the form of analysis of prose models. This factor does not include items which mention writing in class. Instead, students spend a good deal of class time reading and analyzing other peoples' writing, learning from increasingly sophisticated examples.

The Basic Skills Approach. This factor describes a perspective on writing as "correct" expression and a desire to establish in students the fundamentals of sentence and paragraph construction.

The Service Course Approach. This factor describes a perspective on college composition as a general education requirement which prepares students for writing in their other college courses. Writing assignments and in-class activities revolve around the term or research paper.

Differences in Instructional Practices

We used group scores in statistical analyses to discover whether instructor status and course referent groups differ in their instructional behaviors and preferences.

We expected instructional approach to differ according to the goals of the class. That is, freshman composition and remedial composition courses would seem to require different instructional strategies, regardless of the rank of the instructor or the campus on which the course is taught. For example, we expected the Basic Skills perspective to be generally repudiated by freshman composition writing instructors, though perhaps not by remedial writing instructors.

In fact, our sample yields no such course-related differences in practices, methods, and goals. At first startling, this lack of distinction between skill levels can be interpreted in terms of an individual instructor's general approach to writing instruction. Perhaps an instructor embraces a general set of methods and goals in regard to writing instruction generally and varies the level of difficulty or sophistication of specific class tasks and content to suit the student group. That is, the instructor perceives the change in level to be no more radical than the customary variation in ability among different class sections of the same course.

This interpretation suggests that particular theories we hold about teaching writing operate as stable guidelines affecting changeable classroom practices. Thus, differences in any one instructor's remedial and regular composition instruction may not be as accurately measured by questions about theories of writing as by pace, content, grading criteria, and other day-to-day elements of teaching that express instructional theory.

Results of data analyses show more instructional variety within the ranks of freshman composition than between freshman composition and remedial or other lower-division composition courses. We also find variation within the ranks of contract lecturers according to campus on which they teach, regardless of whether the course they teach is remedial or regular freshman composition.

Tenured versus Contract. We used the analysis of variance statistical test to examine the six instructional factors for differences between contract and tenured/tenure-track faculty in their preference for or dislike of each of the six instructional factors. We found differences for only one factor, the Text-Based Rhetoric approach. Our analyses indicate that contract people, as a group, respond more favorably to this approach than do their tenured and tenure-track colleagues (p = .05).

Further analyses reveal that this difference is particularly strong between contract and tenured/tenure-track faculty teaching first term, freshman composition. Contract lecturers show greater enthusiasm for this approach than do their tenured and tenure-track colleagues who generally reject this approach to freshman composition (p = .001).

This may reflect greater inexperience or anxiety among contract lecturers, resulting in a preference for what they believe are widely accepted instructional materials and methods. Or, it may be the inevitable result of the late hiring practices often associated with the use of contract lecturers; in such cases, text book choices often need to be made by the composition chair in advance of the actual hiring of the instructor.

Variations among Contract Instructors. The tenured and tenure-track faculty are a statistically homogeneous lot; however much any one tenured member may disagree with another, the patterns of responses of that group are much more similar than dissimilar. The contract faculty, however, display greater variety within their ranks. Oddly enough, this variation does not correspond to the level of writing course instruction they offer. Rather, these lecturers prefer different instructional approaches according to the campus on which they teach.

Three of our instructional factors show this inter-campus variation among contract lecturers: the Text-Based Rhetoric Approach ($p = .02$), the Individualized Workshop Approach ($p =$

for or dislike of these approaches appears to be a function of the campus on which the instructors teach, not the course they teach.

At first glance, this too seems an odd finding. However, when we look at which factors yield this finding and if we consider the world of the "contract" instructors, we find clues to help us unravel this mystery. Inter-campus differences might include such matters as enrollment size, institutional emphasis, department policy, and student characteristics, all of which would be expected to affect all faculty. However, we do not find inter-campus differences for the tenure-track and tenured faculty, so we must look further to uncover inter-campus differences that affect contract but not tenured/tenure-track faculty.

Composition coordinators interviewed for this study reported they have far more influence in every way upon contract faculty than upon their tenured and tenure-track colleagues. This often includes a central role in hiring, training, evaluating, and retaining of composition instructors. At the same time, they report little or no influence over or knowledge of what tenured composition instructors do.

Our findings confirm the potential influence of the composition coordinator over the kind of composition instruction received by students. It is natural and inevitable that the coordinator will suggest or order materials, and propose classroom practices, that reflect his or her own sense of the best way to teach composition. The contract lecturer is in no position to treat those ideas with the kind of skepticism typical of those more secure in their position. Or, put more positively, the coordinator's superior knowledge of composition instruction is more readily accepted by those of lower status than by peers or those higher in rank.

So why do contract instructors differ along these three instructional perspectives according to campus? We suspect the major reason is in the hiring and training of contract lecturers. Where some campuses hire the same contract lecturers over and over again, there may be few differences in instructional practice between tenured and contract instructors. On those campuses where lecturers are hired late and where there is a fair amount of turn-over in the lecturer population (as lecturers find tenure-track employment or more lucrative professions), the lack of preparation time may dictate reliance upon one of the three instructional approaches listed above. Together these approaches (Text-Based Rhetoric, Individualized Workshop, and Service Course) are the most appropriate for late hiring. The Text-Based Rhetoric approach makes selection of a text fairly easy; non-fiction anthologies and rhetoric texts are ubiquitious and allow instructors to make individual selections from a wide variety of reading material. The Individualized Workshop and Service Course perspective do not rely upon textbooks, but upon the interpersonal skills and common knowledge of library research which contract lecturers typically possess.

While there are many possible explanations for our findings, all tend to suggest the composition coordinator's severely limited influence on the tenured staff and much greater opportunity to influence the contract staff. Should the composition coordinator desire to exert influence over the composition faculty, the six basic approaches to composition described here may provide an opportunity to survey those tenured faculty and develop a departmental policy. Of course, some departments may be perfectly happy to maintain their present variety of approaches since there is as yet no clear evidence that one approach is necessarily better than the other.

TABLE 8.13

The Literature Approach

Questionnaire Item	Item Weight
Instructional Theme:	
to expose students to good literature	.70
Instructional Materials:	
poetry & fiction anthologies	.68
poetry, fiction, & non-fiction anthologies	.64
individual works of literature	.71
Class Activities:	
analyzing literature	.82
analyzing prose models of composition	.35

TABLE 8.14

Peer Workshop Approach

Questionnaire Item	Item Weight
Instructional Theme:	
to teach invention skills, such as planning, prewriting, clustering, heuristics	.42
to provide regular in-class writing in a workshop setting	.37
Instructional Materials:	
students' own writing	.42
Classroom Arrangements:	
simultaneous small group activities, during which I circulate among the working groups	.66
Class Activities:	
free writing or journal writing	.52
students discussing or scoring their own writing	.72
students working with other students	.82

TABLE 8.15

Individualized Writing Lab Approach

Questionnaire Item	Item Weight
Instructional Theme:	
to allow for frequent in-class writing	.79
to provide regular in-class writing in a workshop setting	.59
Classroom Arrangements:	
individual work, permitting me to circulate among working students	.47
Class Activities:	
writing essays on a given topic	.50
working with tutors during class	.41

TABLE 8.16

The Text-Based Rhetoric Approach

Questionnaire Item	Item Weight
Instructional Theme:	
to proceed developmentally through discourse modes from, e.g., description to persuasion	.51
Instructional Materials:	
non-fiction anthology	.63
rhetoric text or style book, without handbook	.49
rhetoric text or style book, handbook included	.56
Class Activities:	
working on or discussing material in texts on composition	.61
analyzing prose models of composition	.56

TABLE 8.17

The Basic Skills Approach

Questionnaire Item	Item Weight
Instructional Theme:	
to teach for competence with basic units of prose, e.g., phrase, sentence, paragraph	.51
to teach correct grammar and usage	.69
Instructional Materials:	
grammar and usage handbook	.46
Class Activities:	
discussing mechanics and standard usage	.65

TABLE 8.18

The Service Course Approach

Questionnaire Item	Item Weight
Instructional Theme:	
to practice writing activities necessary for success in other college courses, e.g., term papers	.65
Kinds of Writing Assignments:	
writing a term paper or research paper	.74
Class Activities:	
discussing techniques for writing research papers	.76

NOTE. Of all the variables in the factor analysis run, only those with item weights equal to or greater than .35 are included on these tables.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Effects of Composition Programs

While our research has (as we expected) raised more questions than it has answered, certain conclusions have emerged with clarity from our data. The most important of these conclusions is the confirmation of our general hypothesis: the organization of composition instruction really does matter. In other words, we have shown that certain aspects of college and university writing programs correlate with improved student performance and self-perceptions.

But before we proceed to present and discuss our conclusions, we need to urge the same caution upon our readers that we have imposed upon ourselves. The fact of correlation, that two phenomena behave in ways that are statistically similar, must be interpreted with care because correlation does not in itself indicate causation. While we are confident that relations exist among the elements we are discussing, there are potentially many reasons for such relations. Two kinds of behaviors may be highly correlated because one causes the other, because they are both related closely to a logical underlying third factor, because of some other undiscovered link, or merely by accident.

It is for this reason that we built into the research design a phase devoted to the explanation of findings. The findings we have developed may be relied upon, since the associations of program factors with various kinds of outcomes have emerged from systematic and painstaking instrument development and statistical analysis. But our interpetations of these correlations, our explanations of the reasons behind our statistical discoveries, are the collective opinions of the research team and are not offered as fact.

An example of the complexity of this interpretation of findings will clarify the issue. One of our more puzzling correlations showed an unmistakable connection between two apparently distant matters, the Holistic scores of low ability freshmen on our writing sample and a certain campus structure for enforcement of its upper-division writing requirement. Since those students writing at the low end of the scale in freshman composition are unlikely to take much notice of distant hurdles while straining at near ones, how is such a correlation to be explained?

If one seeks only causal connections, the relationship seems to be either accidental or absurd. A program design for the upper-division requirement cannot in itself lead to improved performance by "remedial" students working at the freshman level. But the correlation of the two suggests that some third factor, connected to the other two, may provide the explanation. Suppose that the handling of the upper-division writing requirement, a matter normally under the direct or indirect control of the English department, is due to an underlying attitude toward writing instruction in that department or generally on campus. If such an underlying factor is also important in the way the remedial program works, a logical connection between the upper-division writing requirement and the writing of low-scoring freshmen may be proposed. We suggest below that certain kinds of campus conditions do in fact seem to lead to both the organization of the upper-division program and the kind of support service available for remedial students.

Thus, we are careful about giving simple explanations for complex phenomena. We will often come back to what we call the "campus climate for writing," a complex syndrome which appears to affect many aspects of writing programs and, in turn, student writing performance and student self-perceptions. Of all the concepts we have considered in relation to campus writing programs, this general campus attitude toward writing and writing instruction seems the most significant for student success.

As is usual with this kind of research, we have amassed much more data than we have so far been able to analyze. We hope to be able to present later reports on our work through journal articles. But we here present conclusions and recommendations directly related to our research questions, derived from the statistical analyses we have described. We present our conclusions and recommendations under six headings, each of which groups our findings in practical categories: 1) the measurement of writing ability, 2) the upper-division writing requirement, 3) remedial instruction, 4) composition administration and staffing (including staff development), 5) the campus climate, and, finally, 6) recommendations for English departments.

The Measurement of Writing Ability: Holistic and Feature Scales

Chapter Six describes in detail the development and results of the three scoring scales we used for measuring performance on the student direct writing measure. The following conclusions and recommendations have emerged from our analysis of the relationships among the Holistic score, the Correctness and Efficiency (C&E) score, and the Development and Focus (D&F) score on our sample of 3420 essays.

High Correlation of C&E with Holistic Scores

Holistic scoring has achieved its current prominence in essay testing programs in part on the grounds that it moves beneath (or beyond) the correctness of the writing to the thought structure of the essay; in addition, the emphasis of many of those scales is on the positive achievements of the writer rather than on error. Many Holistic scoring guides begin with such sentences as, "The student should be rewarded for what he or she does well." Our Holistic scoring not only maintained these now traditional concerns but used highly-trained and experienced teacher-readers who well understood this broad purpose of Holistic approaches to the rating of writing.

We were thus rather surprised to discover that the Holistic scores correlated more highly with scores produced by our C&E scale than by the D&F scale. It appears as if the Correctness and Efficiency features of student prose form a larger component of Holistic measures than we usually intend, or claim.

The high C&E correlation with Holistic scores suggests the need for Holistic readers to be more aware of D&F features. These might be highlighted by being added to Holistic scoring guides, if they are omitted or slighted at present. But since this correlation is high even when the scoring guide highlights

D&F matters, chief readers and table leaders at Holistic scorings need to consider new ways to direct readers to pay attention to the thought structures of the essays they score. On the other hand, we might consider the correlation as a professional decision about what really matters most in student writing and adjust our claims about Holistic scoring to accord with this decision.

Writing Topic and Research Results

Since the student's choice of topic probably affected the student's scores, the possibility exists that a different kind of question (for example, one based on analysis of a text) or a different question of the same kind would have yielded different scores for some portion of the sample. But, as we discussed above when dealing with topic development, part of the student's task had to do with that aspect of prewriting that leads to a good choice of topic within the demands of a test question. We are confident that the essay sample measured what we sought to measure, partly because we defined measurement goals carefully and kept them in mind throughout the question development and scoring procedure. We recommend that others seeking to measure writing performance directly also seek to minimize the problem of the "one item test" by attending carefully to the specific goals and criteria that lead to the selection of an essay topic.

Further Research on Feature Scales

A C&E longitudinal study would be especially valuable based on the assumption that these skills develop over a longer period of time than one school term. Since our definition of C&E

includes conventional correctness but moves beyond that rather mechanical notion into efficiency, we would urge researchers concerned with these matters to use this larger measure in preference to mere error-counting scales. Correctness remains a major issue for most writing instructors, despite the efforts of some modern linguists and the results of much writing research; substantial instructional effort is devoted to the extirpation of error. Our C&E scale suggests research opportunities in an area now much out of fashion.

We suggest that other researchers may be able to use or adapt our Feature scales where research goals and student populations are similar. We urge test practitioners to be cautious about using or adapting these scales, particularly in the absence of a Holistic scale; their greater precision and focus is partly the result of omitting important writing issues that are dealt with by other scales in our package of three. Thus, the Feature scales would be inappropriate for tests for entrance into professional schools such as law and medicine, since these scales do not attend to the paper as a whole, but might be quite appropriate for diagnosis preceding writing instruction. Our discussion of the D&F scale in Chapter Six offers many possibilities for those placing or teaching low-level writers, and also suggests that a remedial curriculum might more profitably spend its efforts on issues related to D&F than (as is now usually the case) to C&E.

The Use of Discourse Block Marking

We have discussed at some length the effect of the block-marking itself on the Feature scores. The scores might well have been different if we had used the whole paper, non-continuous segments, or randomly selected passages to derive these scores. Their correlation with the Holistic score would perhaps have been higher if we had scored the entire paper.

We did achieve the two basic aims of the block marking: economy, and distinction from Holistic scoring. Although the theory of block marking is, we believe, sound, enough of the experienced readers who scored the blocks were uneasy with the procedure to make it clear that more work is needed before we can recommend our practice to others. Researchers or evaluators using block marking should attend to ways of helping readers feel comfortable with scoring less than a complete essay.

Instructional Implications of the Scales

The instructional implications of our scales, especially of the Feature scales, suggest several curricular innovations. But many questions remain: In what ways are our scales instructionally related? Can we teach to these scales? What do these scales tell us about our course goals in freshman composition? our instruction? our grading procedures? We believe that our Feature scales represent a useful measurement device because they are so firmly based on instructional theory of composition, validated by instructional practice.

From our data, we can feel confident that students are learning something in writing courses. Our concern has been with the implications of that learning for composition programs. The three scales worked well for our purposes and produced the useful data we were seeking for our research. But many instructional research questions outside the purview of our research are suggested by our data: What do our data have to do with learning in general and with writing instruction in particular? With specific skills in freshman composition? What are students actually learning in composition classes? We urge other researchers using our data to pursue these questions.

Upper-division Writing Requirements and Freshman Outcome Measures

Method of Certification and Student Outcomes

Each CSU campus is obliged to certify, through some sort of upper-division program, that degree recipients have achieved adequate writing skills. Exactly how that certification is to be done is decided by each campus, and there is some important variety among the campus procedures. We were surprised to observe that the method of certification correlated strongly with various student outcomes at the freshman level, particularly among those students who had taken remedial work.

Where the only upper-division certification method is an examination, students in the freshman composition program scored significantly lower on all three essay measures. As we suggest in Chapter Eight, this may indicate a negative effect on the campus writing program in general from an emphasis on certification only by an examination (as opposed to using a writing course as at least part of the certification process). Though there is no direct connection between the freshman writing performance and the upper-division certification process, since the freshmen whose scores we analyzed are two or three years from meeting that upper-division requirement, both may stem from the general campus attitude toward writing. We pursue this issue just below.

Administrative Responsibility

Although one would not expect a direct relationship between administration of an upper-division writing requirement and the writing performance of students in freshman composition classes, the repeated and strong correlations that emerge from our data suggest at least an indirect connection. It appears that where the English department is solely responsible for that requirement the freshman essay scores are higher than where the responsibility is more widely distributed. This finding seems to contradict the expectation that upper-division "writing across the curriculum" programs, with their implicit notion of shared expertness and responsibility in writing instruction among the various departments, will enhance student writing ability.

There are several possible explanations for this finding. In the first place, it may be that English departments that see writing as an "English" rather than a University concern tend to be the ones that assume administrative control of campus-wide writing matters. That is, the eagernness of the English department to claim responsibility for student writing may carry over into (or reflect) the seriousness with which it takes the freshman composition course. If this were true, we would find the most effective freshman composition programs on campuses where English departments claimed control over the upper division requirement; English departments more willing to share their turf in writing instruction at the upper division level would be less committed to the entire writing enterprise and hence less effective in their work with freshmen. However, we find that several of the English departments fitting this pattern--higher freshman writing scores and control of the upper-division requirement--did not seek that control; to the contrary, some of them accepted such responsibility only relunctantly.

A more satisfactory explanation of the finding relates to the perceived or actual expertness of the English department in the area of writing instruction. Where the English department is given responsibility for the upper-division requirement (however eagerly or reluctantly that responsibility is shouldered), it may reflect perceptions by others (or by the department) that expertness in writing resides in that department and that campus direction in writing should be centered there. In short, we may be seeing here an underlying trait of evident professional commitment, or even professionalism, on the part of the English department in relation to writing. In turn, we would expect the freshman composition course to be taken seriously by such departments, as a logical expression of this perceived expertness. Such activities as innovation in instruction, support of scholarship in writing, and particular care in the hiring of part-time instructors would then be likely to lead to improved student performance.

These observations do not necessarily invalidate the concepts underlying "writing across the curriculum," which argue for involvement of faculty outside the English department in writing instruction. Indeed, one of our findings shows that the D&F scores of students in our remedial category are significantly higher on campuses where there is specifically focused assistance in writing skills (that is, beyond generalized learning center assistance) available outside the English department. Support for writing outside the English department clearly is valuable. But campus leadership and demonstrated expertness in composition by the English department seem more important still.

Ideally, an English department strongly committed to writing and expert in writing instruction would evoke participation and support from outside its ranks; other faculty would share not only the instructional task but the administrative burden as well. But we do not find evidence of that ideal situation among the programs in our sample with significantly higher-scoring students. When the rest of the university leaves the responsibility for certification of upper-division writing competency to the English department, it appears to reflect confidence in professional expertness, a confidence we find confirmed in these higher student scores. On the other hand, when the rest of the university shares such responsibility, we do not find an increase in student writing performance at the end of freshman composition.

We must conclude, therefore, that student improvement in writing is more likely to come from an English department with a strong and deserved reputation for writing instruction than from a department generously disposed to share its responsibility for writing with the university as a whole. Composition programs appear to be more effective when they reside in a supportive environment where the English department perceives itself and is perceived to be knowledgeable and interested in college writing instruction.

We recommend that English department leaders interested in increasing the effectiveness of composition programs, even at the freshman level, seek to become recognized by their campus community as fully competent to supervise campus writing requirements, even at the upper-division level. The most obvious ways for department leaders to achieve such a reputation are to recognize and reward faculty teaching and research in writing, and to seek a leadership role in campus writing issues.

Relation of Findings to Issues in Remedial Instruction

Implications of the Feature Scores

We point out in Chapters Six and Eight that the student writing sample was graded more severely by the Correctness and Efficiency (C&E) scale than by the Development and Focus (D&F) scale, although we had originally expected the reverse. One reason we expected the reverse was that the remedial writing curriculum (as we know from our experience as well as from the interview and other data we collected) is heavily weighted in the direction of C&E matters. Remedial students at all levels of schooling traditionally spend their time going through drill, workbooks, and (now) computer programs that focus on correctness and efficiency in writing. On the other hand, the more advanced curriculum in writing traditionally focuses on the conceptual and organizational matters contained in the D&F scale. The concept of tone and audience, for example, which has to do with the management of rhetorical markers to help readers follow the prose, is often reserved for advanced writing courses.

Our findings suggest that this conventional approach to writing instruction is backwards. The weakest writers were able to perform best on the D&F scale, which apparently measures organizational and thinking skills that develop fairly early, while the C&E scale was beyond them, despite their completion of remedial course work. (Keep in mind that our student sample was drawn entirely from end-of-term regular composition sections; when we speak of remedial writers, we speak of students who completed remedial instruction prior to their regular composition classes.)

Our findings, then, support some current research in writing theory which suggests that the emphasis in the remedial curriculum on C&E matters is misplaced, since skill in C&E matters developes later. When such a curriculum emphasis (often called "grammar" though it has little to do with what linguists term grammar) is applied too soon, it seems not only to be ineffective but also deadening to the mind and spirit. Some of the weakest writers in our sample, those with low scores on C&E despite their remedial training, showed a surprising ability to use rhetorical markers, shift levels of abstraction, and focus their arguments.

We thus recommend that both placement tests and remedial curricula designed for weak writers attend to the D&F scale and the theory behind it. Such scoring procedures are more likely than the usual error-oriented ones to show meaningful distinctions among such writers. D&F attends specifically to some significant thinking skills which lie behind the forbidding surface of prose, whose difficult codes make many different kinds of weak writers look alike. It is apparent, from our research and that of others (most notably Shaughnessy, 1977: see Chapter Three), that many "remedial" or "basic" writers have valuable skills to build upon. The D&F scoring guide attends to matters available to many weak college writers and hence allows at least a modicum of differentiation and success, as opposed to the simple failure usual for them with tests scored according to C&E criteria.

The same logic suggests that the remedial curriculum could well delay attention to C&E matters, which seem not to be well learned until later anyway, and attend to the conceptual D&F issues that appear to be within the grasp of the students. Such a curriculum has been suggested by Mina Shaughnessy (1977), from her experience as a teacher of what she calls "basic writers." Once again, our measurement findings support her theories.

Furthermore, if we pursue the theoretical argument that language is itself a heuristic, that the act of using language in speech or writing is itself a learning process, a curriculum which urges weak writers to produce writing (as opposed to the study of correctness) will be more likely to lead to learning. Such a curriculum would start with the strengths we discovered in our analysis of the low scores on the D&F scale and help weak writers develop these strengths without regard, at least initially, to problems of correctness. Of course, the C&E

matters remain crucial for successful writing, particularly in a college setting. But these matters seem to develop later and, possibly, only after a certain level of D&F effectiveness has been achieved. We suspect that the odd finding that remedial students perform best in programs without clearly articulated goals relates to this issue. The goals statements we accumulated for remedial classes tended without exception to stress C&E matters. Perhaps the absence of such stated goals allows instructors more freedom to teach a curriculum appropriate to the needs of weak students.

Remedial Program Sequence

It was not a surprise to discover that weak students completing freshman composition perform better if they are in campus programs with a more elaborate remedial sequence. Our findings show that remedial instruction does make a difference and that programs become more effective as they move beyond one remedial course.

While it is, as we say, no surprise that students are more likely to learn if they have been taught, it is worth noting that in the course of the five years this project has continued there has been a major shift in public attitude toward remedial work. Such work was much in favor as we began our study, as part of a strong emphasis upon including hitherto excluded groups in our colleges and universities and helping them succeed once admitted. As we write this final report, we keep hearing public figures and university administrators argue against remedial work as a waste of university resources. Those making such arguments should be aware, if they are not already, that an extended remedial sequence leads to higher scores for weak students. Since the abolition of such programs will reduce the possibilities for success of the underprivileged, it is not consistent to increase efforts to recruit underprivileged students at the same time one is reducing this important support service.

Relation of the Findings to Composition Administration, Staffing and Staff Development

Composition Administration

Only a few of the variables related to the administration of the composition program showed up as significant in relation to student outcomes. One of these we have already discussed in relation to the upper-division writing requirement: it appears that an assertive and dynamic English department, with assertive and dynamic leadership, is likely to assume administrative direction of the university writing certification program. On campuses where such conditions prevail, particularly when that program consists of instruction as well as certification, students write better, and have more positive perceptions of their own writing knowledge and ability.

A second variable in this area appears in relation to the administration of the learning support center. Students studying on campuses which have a special writing laboratory perform at a higher level than do those from campuses with a general learning support center. Our interviews showed us that such special writing labs tend to result from intense efforts by English departments; without such efforts, writing becomes one of many activities taken on by the college learning center, and is not given particular attention or tutorial support. Once again, it appears as if vigorous leadership from the English department in relation to the writing program is the underlying factor reflected by improved student writing at the freshman level.

A third variable that emerged in relation to program administration has to do with the division or centralization of responsibility. On some campuses, English departments divide coordination of the various parts of the program among various faculty: there will be a remedial coordinator, a freshman composition coordinator, and so on. Other campuses tend to centralize the administration of the composition program as the job of one individual. We found that campuses using the latter pattern have freshman students with higher scores on our outcome measures. While we are not convinced that this administrative variation has a direct effect upon student learning in the composition program, it does seem that the kind of administration an institution selects reflects attitudes that in turn affect student learning. It is possible that a single composition coordinator reflects the kind of professional focus and energy that we have noticed repeatedly associated with high student outcomes. Or perhaps composition coordinators who also direct remedial programs tend to keep those programs from specializing too heavily in C&E matters, since these coordinators are necessarily alert to the large writing issues that concern the regular composition courses.

Part-Time vs. Full-Time Staff

Our findings in this area were mixed. Some of our data do support the belief common among composition coordinators that younger and part-time staff teach composition more effectively (because they know more about it and are more committed to it) than the older tenured staff. We have found that students on campuses with fewer than 75% tenured faculty in the English department have higher Holistic writing scores than students on campuses closer to being "tenured in." Students on campuses with fewer than 75% tenured faculty also score higher on the "revision process" self-perception factor. Furthermore, when we look only at students who have accomplished remedial work, the evidence is even more compelling. Such students on campuses with fewer than 75% tenured English faculty perform better than their peers on all three of our writing scales. We are not comparing tenured with untenured faculty, we want to stress, but entire campus English departments with different kinds of tenured/untenured populations. Nonetheless, since the tenured faculty tend to teach less composition then the untenured, our data may understate the difference in effectiveness between the two status groups; we might want to conclude that the newer faculty teach more effectively.

But the factor analysis of the faculty questionnaire does not altogether support this conclusion, at least that part of it which assumes that newer teachers use more up-to-date theory and practice in the classroom. As we show above in Chapter Eight, the untenured staff tends to be less adventurous in their patterns of writing instruction and, indeed, to be rather more traditional. If our data analysis of the factors relating to faculty approaches to composition instruction (which, unfortunately, are not yet completed as we go to press with this report) show, as we expect, that process-oriented instruction is more effective than, say, approaches based on prose models, we will need to question the familiar assumption that the newer composition teachers are the best.

The coordinators tend to have more faith in their part-timers and the untenured faculty because the composition administrators know what these teachers are doing, have generally influenced what they do, and observe a stronger commitment to composition teaching among them. They also get more respect from the newcomers than from the old-timers, who often see no need to hide their dislike of composition in general and their composition teaching burden in particular. It is quite natural for the composition coordinator to assume that the newer teachers are the best ones. But we are not at all convinced that the truism about staffing that we heard in our interviews with the composition coordinators is in fact true.

It may be that the presence of a significant number of newer faculty on a teaching staff is in itself an important positive influence on the teaching of the entire staff, enough to lead to enhanced student writing performance--whoever may teach individual sections. Or it may be that the departments which have sufficient enrollment to earn the new positions to hire new faculty are the most effective to begin with.

We are able to assert positively that enhanced student writing performance is associated with English departments at least 25% untenured. But we are not ready to state that the newer teachers are the best. Our review of the faculty questionnaire, in fact, suggests that (if this self-report is to be believed) the tenured faculty in the CSU take their composition responsibilities with substantial seriousness and gives this teaching the major energy it requires--however reluctantly. While the tenured faculty is more skeptical of new approaches than the untenured, they know of these new ideas and say they are more ready to put them into the classroom than are the untenured. We thus did not see the major differences between tenured and untenured teachers that the composition coordinators anticipated; while differences are apparent, they are quite complex and do not fall into clear patterns.

Faculty Development

In our report on the results of the Administrators' Interviews (Chapter Eight), we pointed out the frustration of the faculty development efforts of the composition coordinators. Numbers of these coordinators, well aware of the great changes in composition theory and practice in recent years, have sought without success to bring these new ideas and the vigorous scholarship articulating them to the attention of the faculty (particularly the tenured faculty) teaching in the composition program. Ironically, none of the formal and direct efforts have proven to work with any consistency; the only generally successful faculty development program has turned out to be an unintended and indirect one, the bringing together of faculty to score a writing test. Nonetheless, the coordinators tended to see faculty development of one sort or another as an important facet of their work, whether or not they succeeded in making it happen. Many of them put a great deal of energy into this effort, feeling (to adapt a familiar phrase about writing instruction) that the process of faculty development is more important than the product.

The interview variable we used in our data analysis simply distinguished those programs with active and aggressive faculty retraining efforts from those without them. The results were clear: students on campuses with faculty retraining programs achieved significantly higher Holistic essay scores.

Campus Climate

Many of our findings seem best explainable in terms of what we have come to call the "campus climate" in relation to writing. We began to notice these differences early in the research, most noticeably in the administrative interviews. On some campuses, the key administrators--particularly the vice presidents and deans--saw the writing program as central to the institution's educational mission; they understood the program and often were proud of their own real or imagined contribution to it. Those we interviewed on such campuses implicitly acknowledged the importance of writing for learning and thinking in all fields and felt writing was, as one administrator put it, "too important to be left to the English department." These campuses also tended to have a wide-ranging view of the responsibility for writing instruction and assistance, with specific writing labs for students needing help, faculty retraining programs, an upper-division instructional (as opposed to merely a testing) program with participation outside the English department, and so on. At the other extreme, we found campuses uninterested as a whole in writing, except for the required upper-division test, which turned out to be a minimum proficiency check on writing ability, with emphasis on surface features of prose. Writing, on such campuses, is the responsibility of the English department alone, and the funding of writing support programs competes with other special interests of other departments.

This neutral (or negative) campus climate for writing seems damaging even in the one area where our data might appear to imply a benefit. If only the English faculty is concerned with writing, perhaps the writing professionals will improve the campus climate by developing a superior upper-division certification program. Our data do show that English department domination of the upper-division writing requirement seems associated with enhanced student performance. However, we did observe that on campuses with a chilly climate toward writing, the English department tends to feel embattled, uncomfortable with its service role, and less than willing to become the bad guys enforcing an unpopular degree requirement. On two of our campuses in that situation, the upper division requirement is in fact run by the Testing Office, part of the Student Service area, since no academic department wants to be burdened with it.

Ethnicity

The importance of campus climate for writing is best shown in reference to a matter about which the campuses have relatively little choice: ethnicity. We find that on campuses with the highest proportion of ethnic minorities, students (all students, not just minorities) score significantly lower in their responses to the self-perception questions in the "cognition" and "revision process" factors. When we select data from students initially classified as "remedial" for analysis, we also find a significant difference in the Holistic score for the direct writing measure; where ethnic minorities are least prominent, the scores of all students in this "remedial" category are higher.

This campus climate finding suggests some university action, particularly in view of our California university sample; population experts predict that racial "minorities" are due to become majorities in many parts of the state and it is becoming apparent that some profound educational revisions need to be considered. Our findings should be part of the series of cautions educational leaders need to consider as they prepare to meet this situation. On the one hand, our data show that the performance and self-perception measures of ethnic minorities seem enhanced when these minorities are integrated into campuses with large Anglo enrollments. On the other hand, these same data suggest that as campuses become more ethnically diverse, all students' self-perception and performance in writing are likely to diminish unless special efforts are taken to prevent this undesirable result.

Size

We found a significant difference in the Holistic and C&E scores of students according to the size of undergraduate enrollment of their campus. The best scores were attained by students from campuses with enrollments between 10,000 and 20,000, a finding that is hard to explain. One would expect that smaller campuses could provide more individualized attention and hence at least show comparable achievement in writing. Perhaps the enrollment-based funding of the CSU campuses allows more support for writing on campuses in this enrollment range. Or perhaps size of campus is not itself particularly relevant, except as it reflects certain characteristics of location and student population.

Recommendations for English Departments

Probably the most significant campus variable for the writing program is the English department. A vigorous and active English department, concerned and informed about the teaching of writing, is the underlying factor behind many of the differences that emerged from our data. It does not seem to matter whether that department is vigorous in protecting its turf of writing instruction or is vigorous in recruiting (and leading) others on campus onto this turf. But on campuses with recognized strong professional leadership for the writing program from a respected English department, students write better and perceive themselves as better writers.

We recommend that the English department assume campus leadership 1) in administration and enforcement of the upper-division writing requirement (including instruction as well as testing) and 2) in establishing a series (not just one course) of remedial courses and a specialized writing lab. Faculty retraining programs are a highly significant aspect of the campus writing climate and we recommend that the English department take the lead in developing such programs in the area of writing for all faculty.

In relation to its own programs, we recommend that the English department 1) seek to centralize administration of remedial and regular composition programs in one coordinator, 2) aim for at least 25% untenured faculty in its ranks, and 3) develop strong departmental leadership that can assume an active role in the university. Goals statements for the composition program, at least as they have so far been articulated and used, do not seem worth the effort, and the tenured staff can be counted on to teach composition more effectively and more conscientiously than they are usually willing to admit. The strong composition coordinator will continue to put major efforts into staff training (including common examination scoring), student support services focused upon writing, and careful hiring, support, and supervision of new faculty. The positive effects on all writing programs, including remedial, from an effective upper-division writing certification program are unmistakable, and we recommend the maintenance and strengthening of such certification programs.